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THE MESSAGE OF HOSEA

BY
MELVILLE SCOTT, D.D.
VICAR OF CASTLECHURCH AND PREBENDARY OF LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL

WITH PREFACE BY
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PREFACE

THE proper function of the Preface to a book is different from that of a critical review. A Preface is not concerned with a judicial estimate of the position maintained in the book; or of details of the arguments employed in it; or of its relation to other publications on the same subject. Nor is it a mere personal commendation, inviting attention to the production of a friend. It has its own part to fill in the volume. It tells of the genesis of the work, so far as that bears on its character; and of the general ideals which dominate its matter and its form. It furnishes a clue to the proper appreciation of the following chapters.

That being so, it is obviously most fitting that the Author of the book himself should write the Preface. For he alone knows all the circumstances of the inception, the development, and the aim of his own work. But sometimes, as in the present instance, he hands over this privilege to a friend, who, being acquainted generally with the facts of the case, may speak of them with a certain detached independence of judgment.

This book, then, is the outcome of a long and patient study of Hosea, which was undertaken in the first instance in conjunction with a neighbour, the Rev. H. J. Huffadine, of Stafford, simply as a matter of private reading. The sole object in view throughout was to obtain a clear vision of the prophet's message. Later on Dr. Scott continued his investigations alone; and it was not until these had reached a comparatively advanced stage that he formed the design of publishing his results.

It is worth while to notice how the various points in

his argument gradually unfolded themselves; and each in turn tended to confirm the conclusions previously reached, and so to establish confidence in the methods followed.

In the course of reading and re-reading the text some tentative emendations began to suggest themselves here and there; and these accumulated by degrees until a considerable number had been collected. Then with the purpose of testing them the ancient versions of the Old Testament were closely examined. And these were found to be fruitful in indications of slight consonantal errors in copying, the correction of which makes no little difference to the intelligibility of the phrases in which they occur. A single instance will serve to illustrate this: the restoration in iii. 2 of שמרים for the second שערים as deduced from the LXX. *οἴνου*.

So there emerged eventually a corrected text which removed many difficulties that had hitherto beset its interpretation. And at this point Dr. Scott proposed to publish the results at which he had arrived for the sake of other students. But, in response to the recommendation of a friend, he deferred publication until he had carefully digested the work of previous commentators on Hosea. This led him further to consider certain larger problems connected with the order and integrity of the text, as it has been handed down; problems which must be frankly faced, if any coherent impression of Hosea's message is to be attained. Thus there is the apparent dislocation of the first three chapters. Could any solution be found that would restore them to a natural sequence? And was it possible to give a reasonable explanation, such as would account for the original misplacement of the several parts of that section? An answer to these questions is offered in Chap. III. of Part I.

The next step was to make a new translation of the text, as rearranged and emended. And this led to a minute scrutiny of the structure of the stanzas in Hosea's

composition. These proved to be almost constantly symmetrical, and the presumption was therefore strong that any irregularities which are found must be due to some confusion, or minor interpolation, in the text.

Finally the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel were passed under review, not only for traces of knowledge of Hosea's prophecy, but also with the object of testing the probability of transcriptional mistakes in the text. So, for example, Jeremiah xvi. 7 is found (with the support of the LXX.) to corroborate the happy emendation of לָהֶם for לָהֶם, in ix. 4. It may be regretted that space could not be spared to give in some fulness the results of this particular line of investigation.

It is of some moment thus to sketch the process by which this fresh and helpful treatment of "The Message of Hosea" was produced; for it explains what lies behind the interpretation set forth in this book. If I may be allowed to instance my own experience, as an ordinary student of the Old Testament, I gratefully welcome it. I am grateful for the readjustment of the first three chapters; for the critical notes and restorations; and especially for the new translation which incorporates their effect. For it all brings light, and meaning, and force to what was before a very cryptic prophecy. The older commentaries did not help me, because for the most part they ignored the difficulties of the Massoretic Text; while recent commentaries did not help, because they dealt almost recklessly with the text. Their usual method of drastic excisions—many of which it is difficult not to ascribe to *a priori* reasons—did not afford any real assistance towards the understanding of Hosea's purpose. Indeed, the residuum that was left, in some cases, was extremely jejune and unconvincing. Then, during the progress of Dr. Scott's work I was privileged to hear from time to time some of his results; and these, though fragmentary, I found full of interest and of promise, and I looked eagerly for his completed statement. Now that it has appeared,

I am not disappointed in my expectation that it would reinstate the Book of Hosea as an evangelical message for the time when it was written; and therefore, in a measure, for all time. And I am confident that other perplexed students of the Old Testament will welcome this book heartily, as a sane and scholarly and sympathetic representation of "The Message of Hosea."

H. E. SAVAGE

LICHFIELD,
July 26, 1920.

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PART I

CHAPTER I

HOSEA AND HIS MESSAGE

WHY, it may be asked, cannot the prophecy of Hosea be left to convey its own message, with whatever assistance is afforded by the labours of its very numerous commentators? The reason is twofold. A large proportion of the commentaries are out of date, having accepted the mediæval Hebrew text as correctly representing the original script as it came from the pen of Hosea. This assumption deprives the work of the late Dr. Pusey of a great part of its value, and much the same is true of every commentary accessible to the English reader issued prior to the present century. Unfortunately, though not sharing this mistaken view, the Revised Version deliberately avoided a reconstruction of the Hebrew text, on the ground that the state of knowledge was insufficient to enable such a reconstruction to be more than tentative. The result of this decision has been to defer the possibility of any real comprehension of the prophecy to the occasion of the next revision of the Bible, whenever this revision may take place. Until this consummation, which is devoutly to be wished, the English reader can only hope to gain an adequate knowledge of the message of Hosea by means of the study of recent commentaries. But these commentaries are very ill adapted for his purpose, being written by specialists for other specialists: they are too much

in detail, and frequently turn aside to deal with the history of interpretation and with many other matters which can be of little interest to any but scholars. Thus in spite of all that has been done for the elucidation of the text during the past quarter of a century, the student of Hosea is so placed as to find himself either with too much help, or with none at all. Were this, however, a full statement of the case, the present book would hardly have been written, the writer having no ambition thereby to serve as the middle man between the specialist and the English reader.

His excuse is that, having begun the study of Hosea for purely personal and spiritual reasons, and with quite another object in view than the reconstruction of the text, he soon became aware that such a reconstruction was inevitable to the understanding of the prophecy, and himself attempted to make the necessary emendations. These so increased in number and in variety, that he was induced to entertain the idea of printing them. Before doing this it seemed advisable to consult the latest work done by other labourers in this field, and he procured Dr. Harper's Hosea as printed in the International Critical Commentary. The study of this very valuable book, which is, in fact, a digest of the results obtained by Continental scholarship, revealed a very considerable agreement in regard to particular emendations, together with a fundamental divergence in principle between his own work and that of these scholars as set forth by this Commentator. Gratefully indebted to him, as one is, for his most exhaustive summary of Continental opinion, for his invaluable digest of the various readings supplied by the ancient versions, as well as for his own often most illuminating suggestions, it is yet obligatory to hold that he is fundamentally mistaken as to the main scope and intention of the prophecy upon which he has lavished the labour of many years, and to join issue with him upon

no unimportant matter, but upon what he himself terms "the Message of Hosea."

The main point of discussion will best be given in Dr. Harper's own words.

"Israel's immediate future is one of doom. Hosea has no bright message, for xiv. 1–8 is surely late. If we could assure ourselves that such passages as i. 10–ii. 1, 14–16, 18–23, iii. 5, xi. 10 f., were genuine, *the case would be entirely different. Hosea saw more clearly than did Amos; and his hope for the future of Israel, based upon the Divine love, was more tangible and definite, but he promised nothing.* He contributed a conception of Jahveh which made such a future not only possible but, indeed, probable; whether he supposed Northern Israel might still enjoy the divine favor is a question, but it is just as questionable whether he transferred the hope to Judah. He taught the possibility of repentance, and the true nature of repentance, if it would be availing (ii. 2, v. 4, vi. 6, x. 12), but would Israel, accustomed to a fitful repentance, ever enjoy the true experience? Hosea scarcely expected Israel's deliverance from Assyria's hand. It was too late. There was a possibility, but it was only a possibility. Israel would not lift up herself from the depths of degradation into which she had fallen. The future is altogether dark." *

This statement presupposes the suppression of all passages of a contrary tendency, and in this it follows such critics as Wellhausen, Stade, Cornill, Giesebrecht, Cheyne, Nowack, Marti, and other recent writers, whose position Dr. Harper accepts, though with apparent reluctance. But for this suppression of inconvenient passages, the general verdict would have been different, as Dr. Harper himself allows. Confining discussion for the present to his statement of the case, it must be noticed that it is not altogether at unity with itself. How, it

* "International Critical Commentary," p. clii. The italics are ours

may be asked, can it be said that Hosea's hope was "more tangible and definite" than that of Amos, and yet that there was nothing definite nor tangible in the promises which he held out to Israel? This seems a contradiction in terms. What was the value of a conception of Jahveh which rendered a brighter future "not only possible but, indeed, probable," while at the same time the prophet uttered no anticipation that such a future would ever be enjoyed either by Israel or by Judah? By whom else could it have been enjoyed? Besides, what can be thought of the mental attitude of the prophet himself, and of the purpose of his ministry? Was he only a prophet of doom; was his only message to be that "it was too late," and that the day of mercy was past? Had he in fact any gospel at all, and if he had no gospel, what was his purpose in calling attention to the inevitable? This seems psychologically impossible!

There is, however, a yet more serious objection, which must here be referred to, though it will have to be considered later in greater detail. It is to be noticed that most, though not all, of the excised passages occur in the three opening chapters, which were no doubt composed at the beginning of Hosea's ministry. If these passages are cut out, it will have to be allowed, not merely that Hosea lost hope during the course of his ministry, but that he never, even in the days of his early enthusiasm, had any hope to lose. What, then, becomes of the lesson which he draws from his own conjugal experiences? If these only conveyed to him the measure of Israel's ingratitude to Jahveh, why was he obsessed by the conviction that he must take back his erring wife? No critic has ventured to regard this passage as a later interpolation, and if it did not imply the more than possibility of a similar treatment of Israel by Jahveh, what was its meaning? Was Hosea, as the husband of an erring wife, to show more forbearance than God

would show to His erring people? It is true that both the wife and the nation were "to wait for many days," but this implies that, in both cases, there was something to be waited for. The restoration of conjugal rights, if it meant anything, must mean the eventual restoration of Israel to the Divine favour and intimacy. Dr. Harper is strangely inconsistent on this crucial point, since he says (p. 216), "Not a word in the narrative points to her (Gomer's) reinstatement in the family," and yet, three pages later, he says that "The purpose of this quiet and secluded life was to prepare her . . . to resume her former position as wife." What is the cause of this inconsistency? The first statement is demanded by his theory; the second statement is his unconscious confession that his theory is inconsistent with the facts. Hosea was convinced that he must act in such a way towards his erring wife that his action should typify the forbearance of God towards Israel. He acted against nature, in order to exemplify grace. He was bidden to "love" his adulterous wife and to take such measures as would eventually lead to the return on her part to her first love. His love in its unchanging constancy, would, given time and opportunity, overcome her infidelity, and throw her into his arms.

This was Hosea's gospel, and not his only, but the gospel as it is revealed in both Testaments, ever the same in its three changeless verities, the goodness of God as its cause, the repentance of man as its means, the remission of sins as its result. If any one of the three be omitted, there is no gospel. If the goodness of God be omitted, there is the absence of motive; if repentance be omitted, there is no return to righteousness; if remission of sins be omitted, there is no restoration. Criticism claims to omit the promise of restoration from the gospel according to Hosea, and states definitely and emphatically "he promised nothing." Does it realize

what is at stake? It would doubtless answer, "Whatever is at stake is not the business proper to criticism, which is only concerned with facts and with evidence." This answer is true, though often forgotten by such as seek to arouse prejudice against those who in their opinion are the disturbers of theological peace. Criticism is not concerned with consequences but with truth; consequences must be left to God. Nevertheless the recognition of consequences should make criticism very careful to be quite sure that its findings represent "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth," for if there be a prejudice against novelty, there is also the possibility of a prejudice in favour of novelty, especially on the part of those who regard themselves as its discoverers. To deprive the prophecy of Hosea of the very parts of it which have spoken peace to the stricken conscience by the beauty of their trust in the Divine compassion, and which were for this very reason quoted by two of the chiefest of the Apostles* as having been fulfilled in Christ, is a very serious matter, and such a consideration should not be disregarded by the most scientific criticism. It should at least suggest the question whether Hosea would ever have preached at all, if he had no better news to proclaim than the message of "a future altogether dark"; whether his own heart (and no prophet was ever more sensitive) could have suffered him to stand forth as the preacher of inevitable doom; whether, finally, if he had preached to such a purpose, his writings would ever have been treasured and preserved. According to these critics subsequent generations were so acutely conscious of the horror of his message that they set themselves by common consent (for these "interpolations" are critically referred to many hands) to remedy the omission, and to write a gospel of hope between lines of sullen despair.

* Rom. ix. 25 and 1 Pet. ii. 10.

These considerations are as much factors of the problem as are the purely literary considerations which have been relied upon to establish the theory of interpolation. There is a human as well as a documentary aspect which criticism can only neglect at its peril. It is certainly a strange phenomenon that a sermon should be preached and should be treasured as a message from God, and yet that its readers should have felt it necessary to add to it many passages so alien to its original intention as actually to contradict that intention. It is still more remarkable that these very passages supposed, as the critics suppose them, to have been written by different hands, and in ages long subsequent, should agree in one point—that they are supremely and superhumanly beautiful, perhaps are as beautiful as anything that has ever come from a human pen; and that the whole prophecy should be valued to-day, not for what it originally contained, but for what was added to supply its deficiencies. Interpolations are not unknown in literature, there are some undoubted interpolations in this very prophecy, but they are for the most part easy of detection, and always for the same reasons, their inferiority to their environment. That an interpolation should rise to the level of its surroundings is an improbability which increases with the literary power and finish of the original writing, with its distinction and with its passion. What is produced in the heat of controversy, what is moulded when the fire kindles, is not easily copied by the interpolator of later centuries, when the fire has smouldered and the iron has grown cold. It takes a clever man to be an interpolator, and he must be so clever as to be able to conceal his cleverness. That an interpolator should surpass the original writer is hardly credible, but according to the critics there are here many interpolators, and all of them have this one thing in common—that they surpass and improve upon the original Hosea, and this in his most characteristic

features, his tender pathos and his unutterable yearning over the sinful tendencies of his contemporaries, who, if the theory of interpolation be correct, had long been in their graves, and had already met the fate of which they had been warned.

Such promises of ultimate restoration might conceivably have been interpolated by a contemporary of Hosea, but no one even suggests this to have been the case, for they are regarded as post-exilic, and as having been uttered when the fate of the ten tribes was merely a matter of history. Surely any one capable of writing such ideal pictures would scarcely have troubled himself to have inserted his masterpieces between the pages of an author so far removed in time and circumstances, and so inferior in his powers; he would have employed his gifts to better purpose. In insisting upon this point nothing is being advanced which any critics deny. Dr. Harper is eloquent upon the beauty of many of the passages which he ruthlessly excises, though he does not appear to appreciate the argument that their beauty is a mark of their authenticity. It is, indeed, a strange conclusion of criticism which places the interpolator in a higher category than the author. There is no stimulus equal to actuality. The best school of eloquence is not the study but the strife. Such eloquence may be rugged in diction and contorted by intensity of passion, but it will ring true, and will carry conviction. No later production can rival the rude sincerity of the man who does not so much write history as make it. This argument will hardly be contested by any competent student of human nature, and the study of human nature is more essential to the critic than ingenuity in scholarship or profundity of learning. Otherwise his most ingenious speculations will be falsified because they imply impossible conditions and an unnatural psychology, because they assume things to have happened which could not have

happened, and men to have acted as men do not act. One such assumption is here indicated, viz. that a later forgery could be superior to the original manuscript.

The foregoing arguments are of a general nature, and are prior to the consideration of the evidence. This evidence may be so conclusive as to render them nugatory. It may, however, be the case that this evidence may be less conclusive than has been supposed, and then these general considerations might prove the deciding factor.

But, however the case goes, whether it be for or against the inclusion of the suspected passages in the true text of Hosea, it should be determined quite apart from preconceptions. It is wholly unworthy of a scholar to accept a particular view because he happens to be numbered among the disciples of a newer and more scientific school of criticism, or to reject it because he prefers traditional opinions. Criticism is the study of probabilities, and the higher probability should always be accepted. It does not follow that any one who endorses or rejects a particular theory, does so out of sheer perversity, or for any other reason than that the evidence seems to him to point that way. Very likely he would personally have desired it to be other than what it seems. That the present treatise inclines in a particular direction is no indication that it would not have inclined in the opposite direction, had the facts as revealed seemed to demand another conclusion. The next chapter will discuss these facts so far as regards the first three chapters of Hosea.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS

THE section of Hosea which ends with the conclusion of the third chapter is independent of the rest of the book, and is a self-contained whole. The problems presented by it are of supreme importance, and the conclusion reached with regard to them will profoundly modify the treatment of the remainder of the book. It seems best, therefore, that this portion should be treated separately. As they stand these chapters evidently teach in the clearest and strongest way the doctrine or more accurately the hope of Israel's restoration. It is, however, affirmed by Dr. Harper, and by other recent commentators, that " a scientific criticism " proves many passages to be non-Hoseanic, and that they are later interpolations introduced in order to modify the doctrine of despair, which alone was actually propounded by Hosea. There is one indubitable argument in favour of this theory, viz. that there is an evident dislocation between verses 9 and 10 (English version) of chapter i.—a dislocation which has naturally given rise to the suggestion that verses 10 and 11, which treat of the future restoration of Israel, form a doctrinal interpolation. Upon the strength of this suggestion, all other passages which treat of restoration, or seem to imply restoration, are also cut out from the second and third chapters, a process which involves cutting down these chapters to, perhaps, less than half of their present length. An attempt must now be made to see how the case stands with regard to

this great excision. It is by no means easy to bring this subject clearly before the reader. In order to do this it seems best to write out at length first of all the passage as it appears after the removal of these verses; then to write out *in extenso* the omitted portions. This will help us to decide (*a*) whether what is suffered to remain is adequate; and (*b*) whether what has been cut out is non-essential and can be dispensed with. For the convenience of the English reader the chapters and verses are numbered as in the English Bible, and the text of the Authorized Version followed. It may be mentioned that verses 1 and 7 of chapter i. are omitted as editorial glosses and do not call for special consideration here.

The Parts retained by Dr. Harper

I. 2. The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord.

3. So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.

4. And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.

5. And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

6. And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.

8. Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son.
9. Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.

III. 1. Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet (again), love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.
2. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley:
3. And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.
4. For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.

II. 2. Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband. . . .
3. Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst.
5. For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.
8. For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold. . . .
9. Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season

thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness.

12. And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them.

11. I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.

13. And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgat me. . . .

17. And I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.

It is not as yet possible to deal with the probability of this arrangement until special attention has been directed to the passages which have to be cut out in order to obtain this result. Something, however, may even at this stage be said by way of criticism. The present writer agrees with the proposed transference of chapter iii. 1–4 to follow verse 9 of the first chapter, but it might well be objected as against this transference that it involves a very great liberty being taken with the text, and that it is wholly without MSS. support. It will be seen later that it is possible to suggest a valid reason for the transference, *but only if both the closing verse of chapter iii. and the closing verses of chapter i. are retained.* But both of these passages are cut out by Dr. Harper, and thus he has no explanation to give of how it came to pass that the passage became disarranged; indeed, he makes the transference without saying more than that chapter iii. is " closely related with the contents

of chapter i. both in form and in thought," and washes his hands of any further responsibility.

A more general criticism may be made upon this reconstruction. It will be observed that the whole transaction between Hosea and Gomer is retained, and that this transaction includes the repurchase of Gomer. Viewed from the ordinary human standpoint, Hosea was ordered to do a thing repulsive to all his natural instincts —he was to buy back his own damaged article from the thief! He was, in plain words, to condone his wife's adultery, and so far from exacting any admission of wrong, or any penalty from her ravisher, he was actually to pay him a price. He was to do this in order by his generosity to set forth the unspeakable forbearance of God to Israel. Dr. Harper argues that Gomer was only bought back for the purpose of being secluded from temptation, and that there was no intention on the part of Hosea to restore her to her position as his wife. This seems inadmissible. What was the purpose of this temporary seclusion if were not to lead to eventual restoration? If this supposition makes the whole transaction inconceivable, it also robs the application of the history to Israel of all its cogency. What remains after the excisions is merely the threat of punishment, the loss of prosperity, the destruction of crops, and the cessation of festivals. Israel is no longer to invoke the Baalim. Surely this is a very inadequate interpretation of Hosea's parable! Its inadequacy will be clearly seen if it is expressed in the terms of Hosea's domestic history. Did Hosea merely desire that Gomer should cease to mention the names of her paramours? What he desired was the love of his wife, and that she should be to him at the end all that he had hoped of her at the beginning of their married life. Did her sin consist in a merely speculative preference for polygamy above monogamy? Would all have been correct if she had been content with a single paramour?

The sin of Gomer and the sin of Israel were one and the same, the preference of the lower to the higher. Hosea had a deeper lesson to convey than the substitution of unity for plurality in the object of worship. Israel had sinned in that she had worshipped the powers of evil in the place of Him who had revealed Himself to her as love. She did not "know the Lord," for had she known Him, it would have been impossible for her to have forsaken Him.

With these brief criticisms we may now turn to the consideration of the passages which have to be deleted, for this attempt at reconstruction must be judged not merely by the inadequacy of what it retains, but by the value of what it discards.

The Passages excised by Dr. Harper

These Dr. Harper describes as "Later voices describing Israel's return to Jahveh," * but it must be understood that this is merely a euphemism for later interpolations. These passages he divides under four headings.†

(A) I. 10. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall it be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

11. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

* "I.C.C.," p. 236.

† He also omits III. 5, though he calls it "the thought which makes more complete the wonderful statements" in verses III. 1-4, which he accepts.

II. 1. Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sister, Ruhamah.

(B) II. 6. Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.

7. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but she shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.

(C) II. 14. Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.

15. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.

16. And it shall be at that day that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali.

(D) II. 18. And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.

19. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies.

20. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

21. And it shall come to pass in that day that I will hear, saith the LORD: I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth;
22. And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.
23. And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say unto them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

It is impossible to resist the conclusion that this very drastic reconstruction has scrapped what can ill be spared, in rejecting so large a part of a very noble chapter. This is allowed even by its author. He says of § A: "Each strophe contains an important idea, and both together form a splendid unity. . . . It is better to treat it as an entirely later piece." *

He says of § D: "Its characteristics as a piece are clear and beautiful thought and perfect artistic form, the metre being regular, the parallelism progressive. . . . Both thought and form are highly poetic. It is from later times than those of Hosea." †

He regards all these passages as "distinct and independent utterances." ‡

Such appreciation is strangely accompanied by ruthless excision. Surely the intense beauty of these passages, which is so feelingly described by Dr. Harper, must increase the wonder of their being regarded as insertions. It would do this if they were due to a single writer, but how much more if they were the work of several persons writing independently of each other! If it be difficult for one interpolator to better the work of an original

* "I.C.C.," p. 245. † *Ib.*, 244. ‡ *Ib.*, 225.

writer, how incredibly strange must it appear if some four or five interpolators, all engaged on tampering with a single passage, should without exception have all of them made substantial improvements! Intensity of passion might well be looked for from Hosea, since the miseries of his defiled home and of his desolate country formed a single sorrow, and the restoration of his own broken marriage tie might well have led him to envisage the re-marriage of Israel with her God. We are, however, assured by Dr. Harper, commenting on the word *Ishi*, that "this implies Israel's return to a proper understanding of her relation to Jahveh, and of the kind of service acceptable to Him—*a thought which lies beyond Hosea's outlook for his people*"; * and again commenting upon the words, "For it was better with me then than now," he remarks, "*It was not an idea that could have been clearly comprehended in Hosea's times.*" † To these criticisms, so likely to be accepted implicitly by the casual reader, only one answer is possible: "Where is the anachronism?" These very ideas are already present in the relationship between Hosea and Gomer, why are they to be repudiated in the parallel relationship between Israel and Jahveh? They were introduced into the thought of Hosea by his home circumstances, and were thence transferred to his interpretation of the future of Israel. There is a reason for their presence if they are regarded as original, there is no reason for their presence if they are regarded as later productions, for they are not merely the prediction of future ideal prosperity, but the prediction of a restored relationship, under the figure of re-marriage. But the whole of these three chapters is concerned with re-marriage both in the admitted and in the suspected verses. Thus the argument against the latter is really an argument in their favour, that they carry out the original thought to a fitting conclusion. No later writer was

* "I.C.C.," p. 234. The italics are ours. † *Ib.*, p. 237.

likely to have done this, nor, if he had done it, to have done it so successfully.

It may, however, be thought that the excised passages come under suspicion for reasons independent of their subject-matter, and for reasons which can only be appreciated by Hebraists. No such claim is made. The recent scholars who advocate excision are no more competent Hebraists than their predecessors by whom these passages were accepted. Further, Nowack in his later views considers these verses to belong to a late utterance of Hosea, withdrawing from his earlier condemnation. Subsequently he revoked his recantation ; but his vacillation clearly shows that there is no such difference of style and language as to make it unlikely that the suspected verses were of Hosean authorship. This being the case, the argument must be held to point the other way, for were these verses produced by exilic or post-exilic writers, it is hardly conceivable that they should not have borne traces of their modernity. This consideration is one of such weight that it is strange that it has escaped the notice of the critics. One supposed indication of later date is indeed advanced, which shows that an attempt has been made to establish a linguistic difference, viz. ii. 18 (Heb.) : " And it shall be in that day," which is said to be " a very common form for introducing a gloss," but the same phrase occurs in i. 5, an admitted passage ; so that this attempt breaks down.

There are other objections made against these verses in detail : *e.g.* that they are inconsistent with each other, and so forth. The complete answer to these objections must be deferred to the next chapter, in which the sequence of the whole section will be traced.

It will, however, not be amiss to give some instances of these objections, taking those made against (C) as being the most important.

(1) The different view of Israel's treatment from that

given earlier in the chapter, where the thought is that of punishment pure and simple; here it is tender-hearted chastisement with a view to reformation.

(2) The different use of the word "wilderness" in verse 3. "I will make her as a wilderness" compared with "I will allure her into the wilderness."

(3) The thought of Israel's obedience to Yahveh in her youth, which does not agree with the disobedience mentioned in xi. 2 and xii. 4.

(4) The order of thought in verse 15, "which is characteristic of later days: Israel's return to Jahveh is here represented as due to Jahveh's generous bestowal of blessings which awaken gratitude, but if Hosea ever contemplated a return it must have been as a result of punitive discipline, blessings coming only after repentance."

(5) Late expressions, *e.g.* "the valley of Achor" is mentioned in Is. lxv. 10; the figure of allurement in the wilderness has parallels in Ezekiel.

(6) The different rhythm and strophic structure from those employed in the genuine verses of the context.

These objections are a fair sample of the rest, and scarcely merit an answer, in view of the perfection of this singularly beautiful passage. First of all, it must be said that there is no inconsistency between different sections of the chapter, since these sections set forth the Divine discipline in its successive stages. The first of these stages was marked by national disaster, by the loss of crops through drought, and by the turning of fruitful lands into a desert. The second stage was to be exile from the land, described as a sojourn in the wilderness. The third stage should be the effect of the two former stages, since in the loneliness of the wilderness God should speak to the heart of His people, and through

discipline bring them back to Himself, and punishment be seen to be a blessing in disguise.

There is again no inconsistency between ascribing certain virtues to Israel in her early days in one place, and drawing attention to her early imperfections in another place, since both views were true. Both views meet in ch. xi. 1, 2: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him"—"as I called them, so they went from me." Israel was neither all bad nor all good in her infancy.

The objection made to verse 15, viz. that Israel's conversion is described as being due to the reception of material blessings, comes from mistaking poetry for prose. The blessings found in the wilderness were not literal vineyards, but spiritual refreshment, which made the wilderness to blossom as the rose, though there were no roses to be found there. This is also indicated by "the valley of Achor" becoming the door of hope. The objection made to this phrase as a later expression is strange, since it is the name of a place,* and it is probably so used by Isaiah, who puts it in conjunction with the plain of Sharon merely as a place-name.

It is said again that this reference to the valley of Achor indicates that an interpolator is quoting from Isaiah, rather than that Isaiah quoted from Hosea. This objection gives opportunity for laying down a general principle of decision in all such cases of disputed authorship. This principle is concerned with the comparative force of the phrase as used by each of the two or more authors in which it is found. It may be confidently affirmed as a sound critical principle that a phrase which is in dispute between two authors belongs to the one in which it has the greater force, much as in the judgement of Solomon the disputed child was assigned to the mother who evinced the deeper affection. As used by Hosea, "the valley of Achor" has a far stronger

* A valley on the north border of Judah (Josh. xv. 7).

meaning than it possesses in the parallel passage of Isaiah. Thus it must be held that it is more probable that Isaiah quoted from Hosea than that a later interpolator of Hosea quoted from Isaiah.

The criterion of rhythm and strophic structure is too subjective to be of any great value. Dr. Harper has to make so many alterations in the text in order to arrive at strophic parallelism that he is hardly justified in his reliance upon this objection.

It is unnecessary to specify any further arguments advanced in favour of the excision of these splendid passages. All the passages which have been thus excised have the same fault in the eyes of the modern radical critic, viz. that they contradict his cherished theories. This is their crime, and excision is its punishment. In order to see the truth of this statement it is only necessary to glance down the list of excisions given above. A remarkable instance is afforded by the excision of ii. 1: "Say to your brother, Ammi; and to your sister,* Ru-hamah." This verse simply has to go, in spite of its absolute appropriateness to the place in which it stands, for the sole and only reason that it hints at the restoration of Israel through its reversal of the names of condemnation.

The section B, though otherwise quite appropriate, has to be deleted because it contains the sentence, "I will go and return to my first husband," and because this sentence refuses to be separated from its context.

The section C, though a passage of simply exquisite beauty, evidently contemplates the restoration of Israel through discipline, and for this reason it stands condemned, though none of the various charges made against it are worthy of consideration.

The section D, though a passage of even greater beauty, and carrying the whole argument of the chapter to a triumphant conclusion, is dismissed with much appreciation

* LXX. text is here preferred.

of its excellences. It has offended even more deeply than the previous sections against the theory of "no restoration," and suffers the usual penalty.

It cannot but be felt that there is a strange disproportion between the merit of all these passages and the vagueness of the charges brought against them; nor does it seem to have been considered that there are sound critical principles which ought to rule in all cases of disputed authenticity. These principles are as follows:—

1. The probability of an interpolation is in inverse ratio to its extent. This is especially the case when the textual evidence both of manuscripts and of versions is solidly in favour of retention, since this evidence carries the general form of the text to a high antiquity.

2. The removal of supposed interpolations should have the effect of increasing the value of what remains, so that the passage is clearly better without them.

3. What is excised should bear manifest tokens of inferiority, it being scarcely possible that the interpolator should rise to the standard of the original author. Inferiority in matter and incompatibility with environment are the universal concomitants of interpolation. Such interpolations are as a rule very easy of detection.

These are sound principles which should be satisfied before any passage should be condemned. None of them are satisfied in this case. The supposed interpolations are of great extent, the interferences with the text are many and various, the parts retained are not always clear, and often most inadequate, while what is excised is of high poetic and spiritual value.

The one really sound argument which is advanced in favour of the excisions is the undoubted lacuna which exists between the 9th and 10th verses of the first chapter. If this could be satisfactorily explained, the one really forcible argument for the theory of interpolations would be removed.

CHAPTER III

AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION

THE solution of the textual problem presented by the first three chapters which has commended itself to recent criticism has now been examined in some detail, and from various points of view. This examination has revealed not merely that the theory of the critics labours under many difficulties, but that these difficulties do not appear to have been sufficiently considered. Its adoption entails the excision of many very beautiful passages, passages against which, prior to this theory, no objection had ever been raised.

Should, however, the theory of the post-exilic date of all these restoration passages seem inconclusive, the serious difficulty presented by the obvious break in the first chapter will still have to be accounted for. This is the contention which lends force to the theory of interpolations. The denunciation of the theory as spoiling the prophecy will be met by the question: "How do you propose to account for the fact that the most important of all these passages bears evident marks of having been introduced subsequently to the composition of the rest of the first chapter?" So long as this contention remains unanswered, the theory in spite of all its difficulties will continue to hold the field, no alternative solution having been put forward to take its place.

But why has no solution been found? The answer is this, that so long as the theory of interpolation was maintained, it was impossible to find any solution for the

simple reason that the clue had been lost. Dr. Harper quite rightly says of these verses that "they cannot be satisfactorily placed elsewhere," and successfully criticizes the suggestion made by Heilprin, Cheyne, König, Guthe, G. A. Smith and others, that they should be placed at the end of the second chapter, a position, which as he very justly observes, gives a very poor ending to chapter ii., and is generally inadmissible. But the failure of this suggestion does not prove, as Dr. Harper supposes, that their retention is impossible. They may be retained, and may be retained exactly as they stand at the end of the first chapter. The fault lies elsewhere, and is concerned with the evidently inappropriate third chapter, which, quite obviously, harks back to the story of Gomer long after that story should have been finished. The whole of this third chapter should be inserted bodily between verses 9 and 10 of chapter i., and then there is no need for any other alteration, and no place for any suggestion of interpolation. Why has not this transference been made before? Previous editors had already seen that the opening of chapter iii. follows on quite naturally after verse 9; why did they not go on to place the whole of the third chapter in the position to which it so evidently belongs? The answer is this, *they had already cut out the last verse of this chapter*, and they were thus prevented from seeing that the chapter fitted no less well with the 10th verse, which now follows it, than it does with the 9th verse, which now precedes it. Thus the transferred passage fits at both its extremities. On the one hand it completes the prosaic story of the prophet's relations with Gomer; on the other hand it begins the prediction of restoration with which the first chapter ends. That it should thus fit at both ends is indeed a very remarkable coincidence, since what is needed to make it fit at the one end, is so wholly different from what is needed to make it fit at the other end, the one end being prose and the other

end being poetry. This assertion must now be substantiated.

The first nine verses of chapter i. record the successive births of Gomer's three children; the last two verses of this chapter speak of a wholly different topic, the restoration of Israel. This is the break or lacuna. Now the first three verses of chapter iii. continue the story of Gomer, telling of her restoration, the fourth verse compares her restoration to that of Israel, the fifth verse foretells that the restoration of Israel shall be complete in the future.

The transition between these two topics occurs in verse four of the third chapter, and is made so naturally, and is so evidently part of the Gomer parable that it passes unquestioned even by the most extreme critics.

Let therefore the third chapter be inserted, and not merely is the story of Gomer continued, but a transition is made to the quite different subject of Israel's restoration, which is completed in the last two verses of the first chapter. Furthermore, these two verses make a clear reference to the story of Gomer and her children in the words "in the place where it was said to them, Ye are not my people, there shall it be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God."

At this point it seems advisable to insert the passage as it stands after the transference in order that the sequence of the reunited sections may become more obvious to the eye of the reader. It should be mentioned that verse 1 and verse 7 are omitted for reasons which will be given later. For several deviations from the text, which are unimportant to the present discussion, reference should be made to the appendix. The passage now runs as follows (the translation is ours):

"The beginning of the word of the Lord with Hosea. And the Lord said unto Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife

of whoredoms, and children of whoredoms, for the land goeth awhoring from the Lord.

So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bare him a son. And the Lord said unto him, Call his name Jezreel ; for yet a little while and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and I will cause the kingdom of Israel to cease. And it shall be in that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

And she conceived again and bare a daughter, and he said unto him, Call her name " No mercy," for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel that I should forgive them.

And she weaned " No mercy," and conceived and bare a son. And He said, Call his name " Not my people," for ye are not my people, and I will not be your *God*.

[*Then said the Lord unto me, Go yet again and love the woman, though she loveth evil and committeth adultery, according to the love of the Lord towards the children of Israel, though they turn themselves unto other gods, and love cakes of raisins.

And I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley and for a measure of strong wine, and I said unto her, For many days shalt thou stay for me ; thou shall not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be another man's ; and I likewise will be thine.

For for many days shall the children of Israel stay without king and without prince, without sacrifice and without pillar and without ephod and teraphim. Afterwards shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God and David their King, and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.] And it shall come to pass that the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered ; and it shall come to pass

* The inserted third chapter.

that in the place in which it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are sons of the living God. And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint unto themselves one head, and they shall spring up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel * (*i.e.* of sowing)."

It will be noted with regard to the second juncture that "the children of Israel" occurs twice over in the inserted verses, and that the same phrase is twice made use of in the now subsequent verses. Again, the reference to the reunion of Judah and Israel in the one passage is balanced by a similar reference to reunion in the other passage: "they shall seek the LORD their God and David their King" being followed by "the children of Israel and Judah shall be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head."

It is quite impossible to suppose that such coincidences should be due to chance, and when the two passages have been joined together their complete unity both of subject and of style is a sufficient argument for the transference. That such a patent emendation should have been missed is indeed strange, and it can only be accounted for by the unfortunate excision of the restoration passages from both chapters. It is thus that the very scholars, by whose acumen the break in the first chapter was first discovered, have, by the theory which they put forward to account for this break, deprived themselves of the one and only clue by which the displacement could have been traced to its source.

This has not even yet been reached, and the most remarkable fact of all has yet to be added. It is a sound axiom of criticism that no emendation should be accepted if it does not account for the original mistake. It is in favour of the present solution that it has to offer a

* *Cf.* ii. 23, "I will sow her unto me in the earth."

completely satisfactory account of the displacement of a part of chapter i., and of its removal to form chapter iii.

There is, it will be noticed, a very remarkable likeness between verse 9, the verse which immediately precedes the break in the first chapter, and the verse which stands at the conclusion of the second chapter. This likeness has been observed by critics, Dr. Harper regarding the one passage as "little more than the repetition of the other," and thus again missing an obvious clue. These verses are as follows :—

I. 9. And he said, Call his name Lo-ammi : for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.

II. 25. And I will say to Lo-ammi, Thou art my people ; and he shall say, My God.

The principal phrases are the same in both verses. *What is now chapter iii. should have come after the first of these verses ; it was actually placed after the second.* Here is the *fons et origo* of all the trouble, a pure mistake, and a by no means inexcusable mistake. Perhaps this mistake was not that of the copyist, who may have done his work correctly. It will be noticed that should i. 1 be an editorial note, and the reference to Judah in i. 7 be due to a later writer, both highly probable suppositions, the number of lines in ch. i. 1–9 is approximately equal to those in chapter iii. Suppose that this length indicates the dimensions of the detached sheets used by the prophet or early copyist, then the fault may pass to the preparer of the roll, whose eye, caught by the similarity of the two endings, appended to a later sheet what should have been appended to an earlier sheet. If this was in fact the case—and the similarity of the two terminal verses is a very remarkable phenomenon—all that can be said is that it has taken some two thousand years to rectify the error of a single careless moment. It may have taken even longer. That this error has infected every known

manuscript and version is a proof of its great antiquity, since had several manuscripts been in circulation the error would no doubt have been discovered and rectified. It might almost be argued that the mistake was made when there were but two manuscripts in existence, the one the exemplar and the other the copy made from the exemplar or even from the autograph of the prophet himself.

What still remains to be done is to view the first three chapters, in order to see if they form a compact unity. In order that the sequence may be more clearly followed, a translation of the second chapter is appended. Various emendations have been introduced, the reason for which will be found in the Appendix. Very little is added by way of general comment, since the attention of the reader is desired for the consideration of the unity of the chapters, and their bearing upon the Message of Hosea.

(A) Expostulation and Threatening (18)*

Say to your brother, "My people," and to your sister, "Mercy."
(Say unto them) Plead with your mother, plead,
For she is not my wife,
And I am not her husband;
That she put away her whoredoms from before her face,
And her adulteries from between her breasts;
Lest I strip her naked,
And set her as in the day of her birth,
And make her as the wilderness,
And set her as a parched land,
And slay her with thirst.
And lest I should have no mercy upon her children,
Forasmuch as they be the children of whoredoms.
For their mother hath played the harlot,
She that conceived them hath put them to shame.
For she said, I will go after my lovers,
That gave me my bread and my water,
My wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.

* The number of lines in each strophe is given in order to show the remarkable parallelism which is a pronounced feature of the prophecy.

(B) Disillusion (12)

Wherefore, behold I will hedge up her way with thorns ;
And I will build a wall,
That she may not find her paths :
And she shall pursue her lovers,
And shall not overtake them,
She shall seek them, and shall not find them ;
And shall say, I will go and return to my first husband,
For then was it better with me than now.
For she knew not that it was I that gave unto her
The corn and the wine and the oil,
And multiplied her silver and gold
Which they fashioned into the image of Baal.

(C) Despoliation (18)

Wherefore I will take back my corn in its time,
And my wine in its season,
And will withdraw my wool and my flax,
That she may not hide her nakedness.
And now will I discover her shame,
In the eyes of her lovers,
And none shall deliver her out of mine hand.
And I will cause all her mirth to cease,
Her feast days, her new moons, her sabbaths and her festivals,
And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees of which she said,
They are a gift to me which my lovers have given me.
And I will make them a thicket,
And the beast of the field shall devour them.
And I will visit upon her the days of the Baalim,
Wherein she burned incense to them,
And decked herself with her earrings and her jewels ;
And she went after her lovers,
And she forgat me, saith the Lord.

(D) Through Discipline to Repentance (12)

Wherefore, behold, I will allure her,
And bring her into the wilderness,
And will speak to her heart.

And will give her her vineyards from thence,
And the valley of Achor for a door of hope.
And she shall be married there as in the days of her youth,
And as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.
And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the Lord,
Thou shalt call me Ishi ;
Thou shalt no more call me Baali.
For I will take away the names of the Baalim out of her mouth,
And they shall be no more remembered by their names.

(E) The Renewal of the Marriage Covenant (11)

And I will make for them a covenant in that day
With the beasts of the field,
And with the fowl of the heavens,
And with that which creepeth upon the ground.
And the bow and sword and war will I break from the land,
And I will cause them to lie down in safety.
And I will betroth thee unto me for ever ;
Yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgement,
And in kindness, and in mercies,
And I will betroth thee unto me in faithfulness,
And thou shalt know the Lord.

(F) The Consummation of the Marriage (11)

And it shall come to pass in that day
I will marry, saith the Lord,
I will marry the heavens,
And they shall marry the earth ;
And the earth shall marry the corn and the wine and the oil,
And they shall marry Jezreel.
And I will sow her unto me in the earth,
And I will have mercy upon " No mercy,"
And I will say to " Not my people,"
Thou art my people ;
And he shall say, My God !

The first chapter, which now includes the third chapter, is a single whole, and in it the sin of Gomer, her rejection,

and her subsequent probation in order to her final restoration, are employed to explain the dealings of God with His unfaithful people. The sin of Israel is as the sin of Gomer, an offence against love: it is no mere infraction of law. This distinction is fundamental to the understanding of the whole book. Hosea is an evangelical prophet, not by reason of any Messianic predictions, but because he has sounded forth "the new commandment." He is the St. John of the Old Testament, the preacher not of law but of a Divine kinship. Hosea first grasped the truth that God is love, and that sin is essentially not to have known the love of God. Here lies the reconciliation of those apparently diverse elements, which have seemed to recent critics so opposite as to call for the dichotomy of this prophecy. The question has hitherto been discussed as if it were merely a matter of textual criticism. Condemnation is left to Hosea, hope is attributed to his interpolators. To the student of sin, both the severity of the condemnation and the intensity of the hope are traced to a single source, the persistence of Love, human and much more Divine. Gomer's sin was against love; in that lay her condemnation. Hosea's love could not be vanquished by sin; in that lay her hope of restoration. As it was between Hosea and Gomer, so it was between Jahveh and Israel. This has been clearly seen by Dr. Mackintosh.

"Perhaps radical criticism is right when it tells us that Amos has no message of mercy. In his book, possibly, the passages of comfort are indeed later glosses. But such a conclusion is unthinkable in regard to Hosea. His most characteristic expression is, *How can I give thee up?* (xi. 8). Precisely when the horror of sin is seen, pardon and rescue become inevitable, and gospel tidings of grace begin to be heard." *

It will be no small justification of the above opinion

* "Christianity and Sin," p. 21.

if henceforth the verdict of textual criticism may be held to coincide with that of spiritual philosophy.

This first chapter should be carefully studied, as it is now for the first time possible to study it, in its entirety. Is it too much to insist that it now forms an indivisible unity? What Gomer did, Israel did. The punishment of Gomer was to be for many days; and the punishment of Israel was to be for many days. Gomer was to be bought back by the invincible love of her husband, and was to be restored to her forfeited position. Israel also should be restored, and the sentence of her doom should be cancelled; "Not my people" should become "my people," yea, "sons of the living God"; and Jezreel, the place of retribution, should witness a better harvest, the harvest of mercy.

This rendering of the first chapter is confirmed by the study of the very noble second chapter, in which precisely the same things are said in another and more dramatic method. Those who would mutilate chapters i. and iii. have been forced to do the same with the second chapter, and by so doing have deprived it of its most characteristic features.

Their first act is to cut out the verse with which the chapter opens, and which is essential to its meaning. The reason for this excision is, of course, that it contains a hint of restoration, in the reversal of the titles "Not my people" and "No mercy," but when this verse is gone the chapter hangs in the air. How could a chapter possibly begin "Plead with your mother, plead," * without previous mention of the mother's sin and without previous mention of the children to whom the appeal is made? It will be noticed that the LXX. reading "your brother," "your sister" is here adopted. This reading joins the second chapter more closely to the first chapter than was formerly the case. The restored children seem

* *Cf.* Critical Appendix.

to represent the better elements of the nation. However this may be, the influence of the children and their appeal to their mother had doubtless been a means by which Hosea had attempted to win back his wife. The rest of this stanza (A) is made up of expostulation. Israel as a nation is warned of the consequences of her infidelity, in the very terms in which Hosea had appealed to Gomer. He had warned her not merely of the loss she would sustain by treachery to her home, but of the disgrace she would bring upon her children, who would be regarded as the children of whoredom. There could be no stronger plea to a mother than that made by her children.

Stanza (B) is the announcement of the first of God's three methods in which He successively deals with Israel. Each section begins with the same emphatic "*Wherefore,*" since in every case the punishment has been necessitated by the sin. Israel has gone after her lovers, the idol deities, closely identified with agriculture, for the supposed advantages to be gained from them. Hence her punishment is *Disillusion.* She will find her way hedged up; she will not receive the benefits she expected. Then she will contrast her position (Gomer doubtless had done the same) with the plenty she had enjoyed in earlier days. The parallel with the parable of the Prodigal Son is sufficiently obvious—"how many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" This is, of course, not repentance —it is only remorse. Neither is it, as Dr. Harper seems to think, a review of the past history of the nation. It is just what it purports to be, dissatisfaction with sin, which, though not repentance, is commonly the first step to repentance, as in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Dr. Harper speaks of this passage as "describing the return" of Israel,* which is quite inaccurate; she only

* "I.C.C.," p. 236. There is the same error in the notes on xiv. 1, where the appeal for return is described as a prediction of return. *Cf.* p. 408.

contemplates a return. In the spiritual language of Hosea, the return to God and true repentance are one and the same thing; and later, in vi. 1–3, a return is described which is unacceptable to God because true repentance is lacking. It is precisely the same in the present passage.

The stanza (C) which follows treats of methods of increased severity. Disillusion is followed by *Despoliation.* This also is introduced by the terrible "*Wherefore*" of inexorable consequence. Because Israel did not recognize that her prosperity came from Jahveh, she must learn that the Lord gave, by finding that the Lord hath taken away. All the prosperity of agriculture which she had attributed to the Baalim, and for which she had returned them thanks in sabbaths and festivals; all the richness of her vineyards which had furnished idolatrous libations, and had been devoted to unholy revelry, should be laid waste. The festal days of the Baalim, which had taken the place of the prescribed worship, should be visited upon Israel. What they had done was to cause the real character of Jahveh to be forgotten.

> "She went after her lovers,
> And she forgat me, saith the LORD."

Each stanza gives in its concluding lines the keynote of the stanza by which it is followed. Once again the keynote is taken up by the consequential "*Wherefore.*" Because Israel has forgotten, Israel must be reminded. Stanza D shows how this is to take place through the stern discipline of exile. Severed from idolatry Israel will have opportunity to listen to the voice of Jahveh. That should happen to Israel which in later days happened to Judah, and thus the wilderness of captivity is described as a trysting-place with God.

This passage is very inadequately explained by Dr. Harper. "Israel is kindly and gently separated from her lovers, and, as in the coming out of Egypt, is guided to

the wilderness for discipline; after this her possessions will be given back to her, and she will again be fresh and strong as in the days of her youth."

This is inaccurate in every particular. Exile is hardly to be described as a kind and gentle process, being the culmination of all Israel's punishment, yet has exile its purposes of mercy. The vineyards of the wilderness, *i.e.* vineyards where there were no vineyards, represent "the sweet uses of adversity," and have the same meaning as "the valley of Achor," which is the door or pathway to Hope. Nothing whatever is said about Israel being "fresh and strong as in the days of her youth." Following the LXX. we venture to translate the verb (cf. Appendix) as "*married*," but the ordinary translation "respond," *i.e.* yield herself to Jahveh's love, is sufficient to show that what is intended is renewed devotion. This could not be better expressed than in the words:

> "Thou shalt call me Ishi,
> Thou shalt no more call me Baali."

The condemnation of these words by Dr. Harper is strangely perverse. He says, "This implies Israel's return to a proper understanding of her relation to Jahveh, and of the kind of service acceptable to Him—a thought which lies beyond Hosea's outlook for his people."

This statement is here quoted in order that the reader may see for himself, after study of the context, upon how frail a basis this and similar assertions of anachronism really rest. The idea thus tersely and graphically expressed is the fundamental idea of the whole chapter, and of the whole prophecy. That a post-exilic writer, speaking at a time when Baal worship was extinct, should make use of such an expression is inconceivable. To Hosea, however, Baal worship was an ever-present obstacle. It misrepresented the inmost character of religion (and much the same might be said of many perversions of

Christianity), because it substituted works done in order to propitiate an angry deity, for faith, which is the response made by the love of man to the love of God.

The idea of reconciliation is carried a stage further in the next stanza (E), which tells of the renewal of the marriage covenant. Now reconciled with God, Israel shall find herself at one with all the varied forms of nature, with beast, with bird, and with creeping thing. War shall be no more, and men shall again lie down in safety. But all these blessings are merely consequential, the true blessing shall be the renewal of the marriage contract. All the sin of the past shall be wiped away and forgotten, and the restored adulteress shall be welcomed as a stainless bride. All her misconceptions of Jahveh's character shall be dissipated, and in Hosea's most characteristic phrase, she shall "know the Lord."

The final section of the chapter (stanza F) bears the conception of restoration up to a yet more exalted plane of thought, especially if the word "answer" be again translated as "marry." The marriage with Israel brings with it every kind of marriage-blessing, and becomes the first link in a chain of blessing descending from God to the heavens, from the heavens to the earth, from the earth to the crops, and from the crops to the once blood-stained valley of Jezreel. Thus the idea of marriage, which has been so frequent throughout these chapters, attains its consummation. But, however this may be with the particular word thus translated, this section is the glorious culmination of a most magnificent prelude. All the previous sentences of condemnation are not merely reversed, but actually become titles of blessing—Jezreel (the place of sowing) shall reap a better harvest, "'Not my people' shall become 'My people,' and he shall cry, 'My God.'"

This simple yet wonderful ending is the supreme consummation, and the whole of religion is condensed in the single word *Elohai*, even as it was condensed into that selfsame word by Christ upon His Cross. Such is the exordium to Hosea's great prophecy, and it is one and indivisible. To think otherwise is almost sacrilege. It passes in a logical order from sin to punishment, from punishment to repentance, from repentance to restoration, from restoration to the fruition of the Beatific Vision itself, which is the marriage of God with His bride.

PART II

CHAPTER I

THE TRANSLATION OF THE MESSAGE

Introductory

THE first three chapters stand apart from the main body of the prophecy. They have to do with the messenger, and show how the message came to him by means of his bitter experiences. The broken bond of marriage made it clear to him that the bond had been broken between God and His people; his own Divinely inspired patience, that God could not be less patient than himself. That was his message.

"Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt His own love can compete with it? here the parts shift?
Here the creature surpass the Creator, the end what Began?" *

Hosea had no such doubts, but boldly transferred his own yearnings to the heart of God. This was the inspiration which alone nerved him to perform his thankless ministry —a ministry which in spite of its proximate failure was "the basis of all Israelitish thought" † in after times, and the virtue of which is not yet exhausted.

This second portion of the prophecy contains the Message, sadly obscured in transmission, and yet not incapable of restoration by reverent criticism. Reverence has not always been critical, and criticism has not always

* Browning's "Saul." † "I.C.C.," cxlvi.

been reverent, but often petulant and impatient, and inclined to overestimate its own sagacity; and the interpretation of the message has suffered, perhaps, equally from commentators who would allow that little was wrong, and from other commentators who would allow that little was right. More is wrong than is allowed by the former; more is right than is allowed by the latter. Between the two, Hosea's message has fallen to the ground. Reverence has left it unintelligible, and criticism has rewritten it, so that the new Hosea contradicts the old. What is needed is to combine the tone and temper of the one school with the more scientific methods of the other school, and both schools will be bettered by this fusion.

To the best of our knowledge there is no translation of Hosea which presents the prophecy to the ordinary reader in such a form that its message can be readily understood and appreciated. The attempt to provide such a translation must now be made. What needs to be said upon the critical reconstruction of the text will be postponed to the last part of the present volume. Much will, therefore, have to be accepted provisionally, and in advance of the evidence upon which it is based, but this seems inevitable if the attention of the reader is not to be continually diverted from the main features of these discourses.

Some notes are added, but it must be clearly understood that they are in no way intended to take the place of a commentary. It is not to be desired that these notes should be exhaustive as regards details; not that such particular study is unimportant, but because it is quite incompatible with the object in view, which is the elucidation of the Hosean message. The translation follows that of the Revised Version as closely as possible, much in the same way that the Revised Version itself is avowedly based upon the Authorized Version, and in the very many passages in which there is divergence, it has been

sought to preserve the style and language consecrated by immemorial associations.

Two important changes have been made. The conventional division into chapter and verse has been disregarded in favour of a division into sections corresponding with the order of thought ; and the text has been written, as it always should have been written, in lines and in stanzas. These two changes constantly support each other, for the thought and the form are very closely allied, and their mutual agreement confers a high degree of probability upon this arrangement. These changes alone would have been worth the making, but combined with textual reconstruction, they are of immense importance. The Book of Hosea is not merely a prophecy, it is a poem, and a very beautiful poem. This fact disposes of many theories as to its production. It is quite impossible to suppose that its final form issued from any other hands than those of the prophet himself, and it is extremely improbable in the presence of so regular an arrangement and correspondence between stanza and stanza that the substantial accuracy of the Hebrew text can be regarded as doubtful. Such interpolations as there are interfere with the strophic arrangement, and what does not do this can hardly be regarded as an interpolation.

SECTION I.—CHAPTER IV. IN BIBLE

THE CONDEMNATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

The Ill Condition of the Land (10)

Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel,
For the Lord hath a strife with the inhabiters of the land.
For there is no truth nor mercy
Nor knowledge of God in the land,
But perjury and killing and stealing and adultery ;
They commit burglary, and blood followeth hard upon blood ;

Therefore the land mourneth,
And all that dwelleth therein languisheth,
With the beast of the field, and with the fowl of the heavens;
Yea, even the fish of the sea are taken away.

Such is the outward condition of Israel. Moral sanctions have been weakened by an era of prosperity. Materialism has borne its inevitable fruit of universal selfishness. Selfishness has led to violence, robbery and murder. It would seem that the prophet takes occasion by the occurrence of drought and famine to summon the nation to repentance. The root of all social evil is to be found in the absence of the knowledge of God.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRIESTS (10)

Yet let none strive and none reprove,
For with thee is my strife, O priest.
Therefore shalt thou stumble in the day,
And the prophet shall stumble with thee in the night;
And I will destroy thy mother.
My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge:
Because thou hast rejected knowledge,
I will also reject thee from being a priest unto me.
Because thou hast forgotten the law of thy God,
I, even I, will forget thy children.

Let no man attempt reform. The priesthood of God has failed to instruct the people in the knowledge of the relationship in which they stand to Jahveh. The word "to know" may equally express the Divine choice or the human acceptance of that choice. Thus to reject knowledge means to disregard the covenant position. There is a manifest error in the M.T.*—

"For thy people are as they that strive with the priest"

This error may be rectified as above (Hermann's suggestion), or as Robertson Smith suggests, "Thy people rebel

* M.T., *i.e.* Massoretic text.

against me, O priest" (*cf.* Appendix). It is very unlikely that a passage which is directed against the sin of the priests should refer to the sin of resisting priestly authority. The expression "day" and "night" is well explained by Bishop Hall. "If thou fallest in the day the prophets shall not be long after thee, for they shall fall in the night."

The Sin and Retribution of the Priests (10)

As they are multiplied so they sin against me;
They change their glory into shame.
They feed upon the sin of my people,
And set their heart upon their iniquity,
And it shall be, like people, like priest.
But I will visit his ways upon him,
And I will requite his deeds unto him.
For they shall eat, and not be satisfied,
They shall commit adultery, but shall not increase,
Because they have left off to take heed unto the Lord.

This stanza is equally divided between sin and retribution. The only alteration in the text is that of "they change" (Syriac Version), for "I will change"; this improves the sense, but is not strictly necessary. Hosea denounces the priests, but is careful not to depreciate priesthood: he speaks of "their glory" as appointed by God. They are not reproved for setting themselves above the people, but for being no better than the people, and for deriving profit from the sins which they should have denounced. Hosea's reverence for the priesthood as of Divine sanction is part and parcel of his conception of the covenant. It lends no colour to any theories suggesting that the Jahvist priesthood was of the nature of a development from heathenism. Their sin is a declension from a lofty position, in the same way that the sin of

Israel is a declension from a definite relationship with God.

Widespread Superstition and Immorality (10)

Whoredom and wine and new wine
Take away the understanding of my people.
They ask counsel at their stock,
And their staff maketh response to them ;
For the spirit of whoredom hath led them astray,
And they have gone a-whoring from their God.
Upon the top of the mountains do they sacrifice,
And burn incense upon the hills,
Under oak, poplar and terebinth,
Because the shadow thereof is good.

The People not to blame, but the Priests (7)

Therefore your daughters commit whoredom
And your brides commit adultery.
I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom,
Nor your brides when they commit adultery ;
For they themselves go aside with whores,
And with priestesses do they sacrifice.
And the people that is void of understanding shall fall.

The decay of religion inevitably leads to superstition, the degradation of the sanctuary to voluptuous orgies on the hills and under the trees of the wood. The general immorality is directly due to the bad example of the priests themselves and to their immoral behaviour with sacred prostitutes. Thus the priests are the real culprits, though the consequences fall upon the nation at large. With the LXX. we connect "my people" with the previous verse. The first verse is not proverbial as explained by the commentators, but a plain statement of fact: there

is agreement between the first and last verses of these stanzas.

A Warning to Judah (10)

Though thou Israel playest the harlot,
Let not Judah be found guilty;
Come ye not unto Gilgal,
And go ye not up to Beth-aven,
And swear not [in Beersheba]
By the life of Jahveh.
Yea, Israel is stubborn as a stubborn heifer,
Shall the Lord feed him as a lamb in a wide pasture?
Ephraim is joined unto idols,
Let him alone.

Captivity is coming (5)

They are a company of drunkards,
They commit whoredom continually;
Her rulers dearly love shame,
The wind hath bound them up in his wings,
They shall be ashamed because of their altars.

These stanzas are evidently a warning to Judah to avoid participation in the worship and consequent immorality of the northern worship. The present writer has not been able to add anything of importance to the notes supplied by Dr. Harper, pp. 262–266, which should be consulted. This passage gives the first hint of the coming captivity. In the last line "altars" (or "sacrifices," M.T.) shows that the main subject is still the decay of worship. There is no sufficient reason to doubt the reference to Judah. No reproof can be more telling than the advice given to another to avoid the company of an offender.

SECTION II.—CHAPTER V. AND VI., 1–11A

THE CONDEMNATION OF THE WHOLE NATION

The Guilt of Priest, Nation, and Court (12)

Hear ye this, O ye priests,
And hearken, ye house of Israel,
And give ye ear, O house of the King;
For upon you is the judgement;
Because ye have been a snare upon Mizpah,
And a net spread upon Tabor.
The hunters have set their nets deep,
But I am the rebuker of them all.
I know Ephraim,
And Israel is not hid from me.
Yea, thou, O Ephraim, hast committed whoredom,
Israel is defiled.

The circle of condemnation widens to include not merely the priests, but the court and the nation. The threefold address is very solemn. The whole nation has been ensnared by the wickedness of its leaders in Church and State. Chapter v. 2 is very difficult. The R.V. translates "the revolters are gone deep in making slaughter," which is clearly suspect. Dr. Harper emends by suggesting, upon the authority of many recent critics, "they have made deep the pit of Shittim." The reasons for the reading given in the text will be found in the Appendix.

The Nature of their Sin (12)

They will not frame their thoughts to turn unto their God,
For a spirit of whoredom is within them,
And they have not known the Lord.
Therefore the pride of Israel shall be brought low before his face;
And Israel and Ephraim shall fall in their iniquity,
Judah also shall fall with them.

With their flocks and with their herds will they go to seek the
Lord,
But they shall not find him ;
He hath withdrawn himself from them.
They have dealt faithlessly against the Lord,
For they have brought forth strange children,
Now shall a blight devour them with their acres.

The moral failure is traced to a spiritual cause, and can only be remedied by a return to true ideas of God. It cannot be remedied by the multiplicity of sacrifices. Dr. Harper's note is much to the point on the word "dealt faithlessly," which is used of adultery. "Hosea is here keeping up the figure of the nation's marriage to Yahveh, and characterizes the syncretism in worship as a breach of the marriage contract. The parents having departed from the true worship of Yahveh, their children have naturally followed, and are consequently strangers to Yahveh, having no place among his children."*

It should be mentioned that in several details the translation given above prefers readings derived from the LXX. : *cf.* Appendix.

The Penalty of Invasion (12)

Blow ye the trumpet in Gibeah,
And the cornet in Ramah :
Cry aloud at Bethaven,
"After thee, O Benjamin."
Ephraim shall be for a desolation in the day of rebuke,
Against the tribes of Israel I have published doom.
The princes of Judah are like unto land stealers,
Upon them will I pour out my wrath as a flood.
Ephraim oppresseth, he trampleth on right,
For of set purpose he goeth after vanity.
Therefore will I be as a moth unto Ephraim
And as rottenness to the house of Judah.

* P. 271.

The time of invasion is at hand: so near that the frontier towns are to sound the alarm, and the ancient battle-cry of Benjamin. The doom of Israel is sure. The readings of the LXX. are here preferable to those of the M.T. For passive participles "oppressed and broken" this version reads active verbs, and in place of "*tsav*," "the commandment," which gives no apparent sense, it reads "*shav*," *i.e.* vanity or idols. Land-stealers were regarded as the worst and most degraded of criminals. It is not, of course, meant that the nobles were actual bandits, but they did the same thing under cover of the law that other men did in defiance of the law. The method differed, the result was the same.

No External Remedy shall avail (12)

When Ephraim saw his sickness,
And Judah his wound,
Then went Ephraim unto Asshur,
And sent unto King Jareb;
Yet could he not heal you,
Nor cure you of your wound.
For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion,
And as a young lion to the house of Judah
I, even I, will tear and go my way,
I will ravage and none shall restore.
I will go and return to my place,
Until they are ashamed and seek my face.

Merely political remedies, alliances and embassies shall be of no avail to remove moral defilement. The real enemy to be feared is not man, but God. He will be like a lion rushing upon the prey so fiercely that no bystander may dare to interpose to deliver. That the inward corruption of a nation is more dangerous to its existence than external enemies is a part of Hosea's message of which we are learning the modern application. This stanza is divided equally between Israel's attempt at finding a

remedy, and the real danger, the Divine anger. The line which follows in the A.V. is to be taken with the next stanza.

THEIR REPENTANCE IS IMPERFECT (11)

In their affliction they will seek me,
(Saying) Come and let us return unto the Lord ;
For he hath torn that he may heal us,
He hath smitten that he may bind us up.
After two days will he revive us,
And on the third day he will set us up,
That we may live in his presence.
Yea let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord.
As we seek him so surely shall we find him.
He shall come to us as the rain,
As the showers that water the earth.

We cordially agree with Dr. Harper in taking this stanza as " the first of a pair of soliloquies." Israel proffers an assumed repentance, which they confidently expect will be readily accepted, and then all shall prove to have been for the best. The LXX. inserts the word " saying." The editors generally accept the emendation of Giesebrecht, and in place of the inappropriate " His going forth is established as the morning " read as above. When this emendation is considered it will be found that it is almost entirely confined to vocalization—and has to a certain extent the authority of the LXX., which reads *εὑρήσομεν αὐτόν.*

AND IS SORROWFULLY REJECTED (11)

What shall I do with thee, O Ephraim ?
What shall I do with thee, O Judah ?
For your goodness is as the morning cloud,
And as the dew that passeth early away.
Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets,
I have slain them by the words of my mouth ;
And my judgement goeth forth as the light.

For I desire mercy and not sacrifice,
And the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings;
But they like Adam (like men?) have transgressed the covenant.
There did they deal faithlessly against me.

This stanza is a soliloquy of Jahveh. He does not so much answer the plea of Israel, as reveal the perplexity of love in dealing with sin. He asks himself whether it be possible to accept so unsubstantial a repentance, which has no more permanence than the morning mist, or than the dew of summer. The message of the prophets, and the signal judgements of God were intended to effect a deeper repentance issuing in a moral and spiritual reformation. God demands reality, and will not be satisfied by empty professions or by outward offerings. These are of no value except as the expression of a sincere intention to observe the terms of the covenant. They are not a substitute for this intention. "Devotions are not devotion."

In Presence of the Facts (8)

Gilead is a city of them that work vanity;
It is dabbled in blood.
As robbers lie in wait for a man,
So the company of the priests murder on the road to Shechem,
Yea, they commit villainy.
In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing;
There is the whoredom of Ephraim,
Israel is defiled.

The last two lines repeat the refrain which concluded the first stanza of the section, the prophet, as it were, ending with the text with which he began his discourse to the nation. This seems to indicate that this section is rightly regarded as a unity complete in itself. It should be noticed that the verse "Also, O Judah, he hath set a harvest for thee" is a later addition to the text, whether added for the condemnation or for the encouragement

of Judah in later times. Probably this addition was made because the reference to turning the captivity, which belongs to the next section, was thought to refer to the captivity of Judah. This stanza shows the degraded state of the priesthood, who are no better than common highwaymen, slaying those who seek the protection of the cities of refuge. Some parts of this stanza are probably incorrect, but no suggested emendations are at all likely. The general sense is sufficiently clear.

SECTION III.—CHAPTER VI. 11B—VIII. 10

THE STATE OF NATIONAL CONFUSION AND THREATENED REJECTION

THINGS ARE PAST REMEDY (11)

When I would turn the captivity of my people,
When I would heal Israel,
Then is the iniquity of Ephraim discovered,
And the wickedness of Samaria ;
For they commit falsehood ;
And the thief entereth in,
And the band of robbers spoileth without.
And they say not in their hearts,
That I remember all their wickedness.
Now have their doings encompassed them,
They have entered in to my presence.

The present section has been taken as part of the previous section, but it seems better to consider it as a separate discourse. It is principally concerned with the sins of the court and of the nation generally. The first line of this stanza is commonly taken with the previous section, but is much better taken as above. The general idea of this stanza is evidently that the mercy of God is frustrated by the moral failure of the nation, and that this condition of things is known to Him.

The Raging Lusts of the Court (14)

They make the king glad with their wickedness,
And the princes with their lies.
They are all of them inflamed with lust,
Like an oven kindled by the baker.
By day our king is sick,
And the princes with the heat of wine.
He stretcheth out his hand with scorners,
For like an oven their hearts burn with treachery,
All the night long their wrath sleepeth,
In the morning it burneth as a flaming fire.
They are all as hot as an oven,
And have devoured their judges;
All their kings have fallen,
There is none among them that calleth upon me.

The discussion of the details of this passage may be left to the commentaries. Fortunately it has little to do with the message of Hosea. Dr. Harper and other editors suggest by the mutation of a single letter "they anoint" in place of "they make glad." They regard the words "He ceaseth from raising after he hath kneaded the dough until it be leavened" as a marginal note introduced into the text. This seems very probable. Harper explains the general drift as follows: "The thought in general is that of a conspiracy, which is kept secret while it is maturing, but which after a period breaks out. The night is the time for development, in the morning it becomes public." For further details, *cf.* Appendix.

Vain Hopes of Foreign Assistance (14)

Ephraim he hath mixed himself among the nations,
Ephraim is a cake not turned.
Strangers have devoured his strength,
And he knoweth it not;
Yea, grey hairs are sprinkled upon him,
And he knoweth it not.

The haughtiness of Israel is humbled before his face ;
Yet have they not returned unto the Lord their God,
And for all this have they not sought Him.
Ephraim is like a silly dove without understanding,
They call upon Egypt, they go unto Asshur ;
Even as they go, I will spread my net upon them,
I will bring them down as the fowls of heaven,
I will destroy them as their congregation hath heard.

So far from alliances being any strength to Israel, connection with foreign nations has sapped her strength. She is no longer wholly devoted to Jahveh, but half-hearted in His service, "a cake not turned." Once again the verb usually translated "answer" is translated "humbled" as in the LXX. (*cf.* V. 5, and App. *in loc.*). Their humiliations have not had the result of bringing them back to God, but have only made them more eager after alliances with Egypt and Assyria. The last verse is suspected, but it is at least as satisfactory as any of the emendations proposed—it seems to refer to prophetic warnings given as to the nature of their coming doom.

They turn anywhere save to God (14)

Woe unto them ! for they have strayed from me ;
Destruction unto them ! for they have transgressed against me ;
I, indeed, redeemed them,
But they have spoken lies against me.
And they cried not unto me with their hearts,
Yea, they howl unto their images ;
They cut themselves for corn and wine,
They rebel against me.
I have trained, I have strengthened, their arms,
Yet against me did they devise mischief :
They returned unto that which is not.
They are like unto a treacherous bow :
Their princes shall fall by the sword for the insolence of their tongue,
This shall be for their derision in the land of Egypt.

The sin of Israel is its ingratitude to Jahveh. In spite of all His benefits of redemption and discipline they cast off His service, and when punishment comes, turn for help to their idols. The R.V. gives "they howled upon their beds," which is clearly impossible. Dr. Harper makes the not very happy suggestion "upon their altars," since it is hard to imagine how this could have given rise to the present reading. The alteration of a single letter gives "their images;" the word is a rare one, and the corruption is thus naturally accounted for. The alteration of very similar consonants gives the good reading "they cut or mutilate themselves" in place of "they collect themselves." This change is generally accepted, and has the authority of the LXX. The editors try to alter the last verse, but it gives good sense; the insolent boasting of Israel turns to their derision.

Threatened Rejection (11)

Set a trumpet to thy mouth,
For as an eagle (he cometh) against the house of the Lord;
Because they have transgressed my covenant,
And trespassed against my law.
Unto me they cry, My God, we [Israel ?] know thee.
Israel hath cast off the thing that is good,
An enemy shall pursue him.
They made themselves kings, but not from me,
They made princes and I knew it not;
Of their silver and gold they made themselves idols
That they might be cut off.

A warning of speedy invasion and punishment for breach of the covenant with Jahveh. Their appeals to Jahveh will not be heeded because they have cast away "the good." "This includes everything for which Jahveh has stood, . . . as well as Jahveh Himself." * The monarchy was self-chosen, and not according to the mind of Jahveh. Their worship also was of their own invention.

* "I.C.C.," p. 309.

AN APPEAL TO CAST AWAY IDOLATRY (7)

Cast away thy calf, O Samaria.
Mine anger is kindled against them.
How long will they return not to innocency?
For of Israel was it;
And it, the workman made it,
Therefore it is not God.
Yea, the calf of Samaria shall be broken to atoms.

BECAUSE OF ITS UNPROFITABLENESS (7)

Yea, they have sown the wind,
And they shall reap the whirlwind.
It hath no stalk,
The blade shall yield no meal;
If so be that it yield,
Strangers shall devour it.
Israel is devoured.

AND BECAUSE OF THEIR HELPLESSNESS (7)

Now are they cast away among the nations as a faulty vessel;
Yea, they go up to Asshur,
Ephraim is a wild ass wandering alone,
They hire lovers;
Yea, though they hire among the nations,
Now will I gather them;
And they shall cease for a space from anointing king and princes.

These three brief stanzas, with their short abrupt lines, are an appeal to Israel to cast away their idolatry. They are worshipping what is not God, but the work of the craftsman. It is only metal, and like metal shall be broken in pieces. All that they have achieved is utter failure. They have sown the wind of vanity, and shall reap the hurricane of destruction. Their harvest has failed, and in so far as it has not failed others shall have the benefit of it. Their dependence upon the nations

will lead to their being taken captive among the nations. Though like a wild ass that leaves the herd to find a mate, they seek alliance with foreign nations, they will only be captured, and the monarchy overthrown.

SECTION IV.—CHAPTER VIII. 11—IX 9

THE CONDEMNATION OF SACRIFICIAL WORSHIP

GOD REJECTS ISRAEL'S SACRIFICES (8)

Because Ephraim hath multiplied altars [for sin ?]
For sin shall (his) altars be unto him.
I wrote unto him the words of my law,
Yet my chosen sacrifices were regarded as a strange thing.
They sacrifice flesh and eat it,
But the LORD accepteth them not.
Now shall he remember their iniquity,
And shall visit their sins.

The text has also the following lines :—

They shall return to Egypt.
For Israel hath forgotten his maker,
And buildeth palaces ;
And Judah hath multiplied fenced cities :
But I will send fire upon his cities,
And it shall devour his palaces.

The LXX. also adds to " They shall return to Egypt " the words " And they shall eat unclean things in Assyria," thus making this couplet identical with the end of the next stanza, where these words are much more appropriate. The style of the rest is suspiciously like that of Amos i. 4–ii. 5, and of Isaiah li. 13. But there is another argument against the verses, viz. that they offend against the Hosean use of the refrain at the end of the first and last stanza of a section. For this, compare v. 3,

which stands at the end of a first stanza, with vi. 10, which stands at the end of the section. Here, if the suspicious words are cut out, we have precisely the same feature—both the first stanza and the last (ix. 9) ending with the refrain—

> "He shall remember their iniquity,
> And shall visit their sins."

This interpolation conforms to a rule laid down in the Critical Appendix, that interpolations are beneath the level of the context in which they occur, and are easily recognizable. Here the interpolation has nothing to do with the subject under discussion, which is not the destruction of cities and palaces, but the errors of sacrificial worship. A possible explanation of the addition of six lines is that it was made in order to bring the stanza to the frequent length of fourteen verses, it not having been noticed that in this section the stanza is one of eight lines.

THE DOOM OF SACRIFICE (8)

Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy as do the nations,
For thou hast gone awhoring from thy God.
Thou hast loved a gift upon every cornfloor.
The floor and the wine vat shall not know them,
And the new wine shall disappoint them.
They shall not dwell in the LORD's land;
But Ephraim shall return to Egypt,
And they shall eat unclean things in Asshur.

NO SACRIFICES IN EXILE (8)

They shall not offer wine offerings to the LORD,
Neither shall their sacrifices be pleasant unto him:
Their bread shall be as the bread of mourners,
All that eat of it shall be defiled:
For their bread shall be for their sustenance,
It shall not enter into the house of the LORD.
What will ye offer on the solemn festival,
And on the day of the feast of the LORD?

For the important emendation of "bread" in place of the word "to them," *cf.* notes. We translate "offer" in place of the vague "do" in the last line but one. This has the support of some MSS. of the LXX., in which is read "What shall be offered." The sentence obviously goes with this stanza, and is not to be taken, as generally, with the next stanza. There will be no bread to spare, so that there will be nothing to offer upon the altar.

THEY SHALL LEAVE THEIR HOLY PLACES BEHIND THEM (8)

For behold they shall flee from destruction to Egypt,
Memphis shall gather them,
Machmad shall bury them.
As for their silver shrines nettles shall possess them,
Thorns shall be in their tabernacles.
Come are the days of visitation!
Come are the days of vengeance!
Israel shall know it.

Israel, in their rush for safety to Egypt, will leave their places of worship to the desolation of nettles and thorns, much as happened to the monastic buildings in this country. But they shall never return, for either Memphis, the great burial-ground of Egypt, shall detain them, or Machmad, which stands for the quicksands upon which it is situated, shall bury them, in case they should make the journey by sea. The LXX. supplies this excellent reading, in place of "the delectable things of silver" which is the hopeless reading of the M.T.: *cf.* Appendix.

THIS IS THE RESULT OF DESPISING THE PROPHET'S WARNING (8+2 lines of the refrain)

The prophet is a fool,
The man of the Spirit is mad,
Because of the greatness of thine iniquity,
And thy great enmity.

Ephraim setteth an ambush against the people of my God ;
The prophet, a fowler's snare is in all his paths,
They have hidden a net in the house of his God.
They corrupt themselves as in the days of Gibeah.
He shall remember their iniquity,
He shall visit their sins.

This passage both in the A.V. and R.V. is simply incomprehensible. It is practically re-written by Dr. Harper, who, after making no less than four considerable alterations or omissions, says of the result that "the parallelism is perfect, and the sense excellent," which ought to be the case after so much remodelling. Marti also re-writes the passage, but re-writes it quite differently. It is impossible to give the grounds upon which the present reconstruction is based, here, but they will be found in the Appendix.

SECTION V.—CHAPTER IX. 10—END

A SPECIAL SIN AND ITS PENALTY

The Sin (10)

Like grapes in the wilderness did I discover Israel ;
Like the early fruit of the fig tree did I behold your fathers ;
They came unto Baal-peor, and separated themselves unto shame
And became foul as that which they loved.
Ephraim, like a bird their glory shall fly away,
From the birth and from the womb, and from the conception.
Yea, though they bring up their children, to a man will I bereave them.
Yea, woe unto them when I depart from them !
Ephraim, like as I have seen, hath put his children to the knife,
But Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the slaughterer.

The Penalty (10)

Give unto them, Lord, what wilt thou give unto them?
Give unto them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.
All their wickedness is in Gilgal, for there did I hate them.
For the evil of their doings from my house will I drive them;
I will love them no more, all their rulers are revolters.
Ephraim is smitten, their root is parched, they bear no fruit;
Yea, though they bring forth (children)
I will slay the darlings of their womb.
My God shall reject them for that they hearkened not to him,
And they shall become wanderers among the nations.

This section seems to stand by itself both in its subject and in its sombre prosody with its crowded and heavy lines. It is undoubtedly a unity, the sin recorded in the first stanza being recompensed by a fitting penalty in the second stanza. What can this sin have been?

The only answer possible is that there had been the practice of child sacrifice. At once the whole section becomes consistent, and the penalty is seen to be the consequence of the sin. The diminished number of children is the direct result of the deaths owing to this superstitious and evil practice, and the consequence will be such weakness before the enemy that the remnant of the children will be yet further diminished by the sword of the invader. Thus the best fate that can now befall the nation is that they should cease to propagate children, lest these children should become fodder for the sword. It would seem from this passage that Gilgal was the seat of this horrible cult. Doubtless there is a certain amount of exaggeration in all this, for it is hard to believe that the practice could ever have been so common as to have national results. Dr. Harper says that there is no evidence for this practice having been

carried on at Gilgal, but this passage is certainly of the nature of evidence, though it is at the same time a proof that the fact was not generally known to the nation. Both Kings and Chronicles speak of the prevalence of this custom under Ahaz, a contemporary of Pekah. Here it is difficult not to refer to the fate of France—her diminished birth-rate as compared with that of Germany laid her open to invasion, and she has been bled white of her youth in recompense for the babes who, but for this restriction, might have kept away invasion. Though children are no longer sacrificed to Moloch they are still sacrificed to Mammon, and it is no exaggeration to affirm that, whatever may have been the case with Israel, the result has come very near to the verification of this prophecy.

For very important emendations, *cf.* Appendix.

SECTION VI.—CHAPTER X

THE THREAT OF INVASION

The Coming Invasion (12)

Israel was a spreading vine, of goodly fruit,
As his fruit increased, he made increase of his altars,
As his land became rich, he enriched his shrines.
Their heart is divided,
Now shall they be condemned.
He shall break down their altars,
He shall spoil their shrines.
Yea, now shall they say, We have no King,
Because we feared not the Lord;
And the King, what can he do for us?
He speaketh words, swearing falsely in making a covenant;
Therefore judgement groweth as hemlock in the furrows of the field.

The Spoliation of Shrines (12)

For the calf of Bethaven shall the dwellers of Samaria tremble;
Yea, his people shall mourn over it,
And his ministers shall lament over it,
For its glory that it is departed from it.
Yea, it shall be carried to Asshur, a gift to King Jareb.
Ephraim shall inherit shame,
And Israel shall be ashamed of his counsel.
Samaria her king is cut off like a twig upon the waters;
The high places of Aven [the sin of Israel] shall be destroyed,
The thorn and the thistle shall grow upon his altars.
And they shall say to the mountains, Fall on us,
And to the hills, Cover us.

These two stanzas are evidently closely connected. They clearly refer to the time of Hoshea, the last King of Samaria. The words "we have no king" refer to the imprisonment of Hoshea by Shalmaneser, and the words "swearing falsely making a covenant" to his refusal to send the tribute which he had pledged himself to pay year by year to Assyria. These facts are set forth 2 Kings xvii. 3, 4. Shalmaneser made two invasions, the first in which he imposed the tribute, and the second which he undertook because Hoshea had broken the terms agreed upon.

The three stanzas which follow are not closely connected with the preceding stanzas except that they relate to the same occasion, and may therefore be included in the same section. The reference to Beth-arbel as destroyed by Shalman seems to refer to the first of the two invasions. These stanzas, especially the first, are very difficult, and there is reason to suspect that the text is corrupt. Many emendations have been suggested, but none of them possess much claim to consideration. The writer can only surmise that in some way or other there has been a confusion introduced between verses 8 and 9, and that

" the sin of Israel " should be cut out from the former verse, and the words " there they stood " from the latter verse. But there can be no assurance placed in any suggestion.

A Second Gibeah (10)

From the days of Gibeah thou hast sinned, O Israel,
[There they stood.]
Shall not war overtake them in Gibeah ?
Against the children of wickedness have I come to destroy them,
And against them shall the peoples be gathered together,
To chastise them for their two iniquities.
Ephraim is a tamed heifer loving to thresh out the corn,
But I will put a yoke upon the beauty of her neck.
I will harness Ephraim,
Judah shall plough,
Jacob shall break his clods.

The Two Harvests (8)

Sow to yourselves in righteousness,
Reap according to mercy,
Break up your fallow ground :
For there is time to seek the Lord,
That he may come and rain righteousness upon you.
Ye have ploughed wickedness,
Ye have reaped unrighteousness,
Ye have eaten the fruit of lies.

The Invasion is at Hand (8)

Because thou didst trust in thy chariots,
In the multitude of thy mighty men,
Therefore a tumult shall arise among thy peoples,
And all thy fortresses shall be spoiled,
As Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel in the day of war :
The mother shall be dashed to pieces with her children.
Thus shall I do unto you, O house of Israel, for your great wickedness :
In the dawning shall the King of Israel be utterly destroyed.

The first of these stanzas threatens a second Gibeah. As it was in the case of Gibeah so shall it be again. There the nation rose up against an offending tribe, now the nations shall rise up against an offending nation, and chastise it for its twofold iniquity (? the two calves). Ephraim has been dealt with with every consideration, like a heifer set to do the easy work of threshing. Now there is for her the sterner task of ploughing.

This gives occasion for the second stanza. What will the ploughing be ? Will it be the ploughing of repentance, or will it be the ploughing of the past which has only resulted in a harvest of lies ? There is still time to make the change and to seek the LORD. In either case the harvest will be in accordance with the sowing. There is one law both for the bad and for the good. Each will reap what he sows. The third stanza merely pictures the invasion.

SECTION VII.—CHAPTER XI

A SONG OF THE COVENANT

This important section is of singular beauty. It is complete in itself, and sets forth the covenant position as dating from the very infancy of the nation, and as manifested historically in the Exodus. The sin of Israel consists in ignoring this hallowed relationship, and for this sin Israel is to be sorely punished by a return to Egypt, not, however, to the literal Egypt, for the scene of this captivity will be Assyria. Is then the covenant at an end ? On all human principles of justice this would be the case ; but Jahveh is " God and not man." In a passage of wonderful intensity Hosea depicts the conflict

of emotions in the heart of God. Dr. Harper signally fails to grasp the significance of this noble passage. He excises from it all that he can, but enough remains to prove that the promise of restoration, which it is his object to remove from the book, is in fact ineradicable.

The Love of Israel's Childhood (11)

When Israel was a child then I loved him,
And called my son out of Egypt.
As I called them, so they went from me;
Yea, they sacrificed to the Baalim,
They burned incense to images.
Yet did I teach Ephraim to walk,
I took him by his arms,
But they knew not that I healed them.
I drew them with cords of a man [with bands of love?];
And I was to them as they that lift up a babe to their bosom,
And I bent down unto him and carried him.

The Septuagint gives several interesting readings which are here adopted (*cf.* Appendix). The most important emendation introduced is that of the last two lines, which are rendered in the R.V., "I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat before them." This is so incongruous with its beautiful surroundings that there is evidently some deep-seated corruption. The full reconstruction of these lines cannot be understood without reference to the treatment of the passage which will be found in the Appendix.

The Penalty for Disobedience (9)

He shall return to the land of Egypt,
And Asshur, he shall be his king,
Because they have refused to return.
And the sword shall be brandished over their cities,
And shall destroy his branches:
And they shall eat of their own counsels.

My people have gathered themselves together to revolt
from me.
And though they called them to the Most High,
None at all would exalt him.

This passage is one of peculiar difficulty. The received text reads "he shall not return," but the "not" should probably belong to the previous line, where it masks the true reading "him." As before mentioned, the scene of the future captivity, though it is called Egypt, will really be Assyria—as a second Egypt. The received text of the last line but two is clearly corrupt. The emendation given above (*cf.* Appendix) involves an alteration in the order of the consonants, and no other change whatever in the consonantal text. The word introduced is a rare one, and occurs Job xvi. 10, where it is rendered "they have gathered themselves together."

The Remorse of God (11)

How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?
How shall I relinquish thee, Israel?
How can I make thee as Admah?
How can I set thee as Zeboim?
Mine heart is turned within me,
My compassions are kindled together.
I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger,
I will not return to destroy Ephraim:
For I am God and not man,
The holy one in the midst of thee,
And I will not come against the city.

There is no better commentary upon these verses than that given by George Adam Smith (p. 297). "There follows the greatest passage in Hosea—deepest if not highest of his book—the breaking forth of that exhaustless mercy of the Most High, which no sin of man can bar back

nor wear out." The passage is perfectly simple, and it is almost sacrilege to suggest, as do the most recent critics, that it has been interpolated. The only emendation at all worth mention is the substitution of "in anger" for "against the city," but the received text has the support of the Septuagint—and there is no need of change. Shalmaneser very shortly afterwards came against the city, since Hosea's remonstrances had passed unheeded, and he besieged Jerusalem for some two or three years. Any excision would destroy the correspondence in length between this stanza and the first stanza.

The Restoration of Israel (7)

They shall go after the LORD,
As a lion shall he roar;
Yea, he shall roar,
And (his) children shall speed from the sea.
They shall speed like sparrows from Egypt,
And as doves from the land of Asshur,
And I will cause them to dwell in their own homes, saith the LORD.

The summons of Jahveh to his people shall be loud as the roar of a lion—and his sons shall come back like birds returning from their annual migration. This distinct assertion of restoration is by no means to the taste of the commentators who have made up their minds that restoration was beyond the outlook of Hosea, and they try very hard to cut out as much as possible, but they cannot make a clean cut. There is, in fact, no reason for any change at all. The only question of importance is concerned with the four lines which in the English text end this stanza. In the Hebrew text, however, they belong to the next chapter.

SECTION VIII.—CHAPTER XII

SIN AND PUNISHMENT

This section is of exceptional difficulty. In order that this may be fully recognized, it seems necessary that it should be placed before the reader in the form in which it appears in the English Version (A.V.).

1 Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt.

2 The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him.

3 ¶ He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God:

4 Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him *in* Bethel, and there he spake with us;

5 Even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD *is* his memorial.

6 Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.

7 *He is* a merchant, the balances of deceit *are* in his hand: he loveth to oppress.

8 And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: *in* all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that *were* sin.

9 And I *that am* the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast.

10 I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

11 *Is there* iniquity *in* Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars *are* as heaps in the furrows of the fields.

12 And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept *sheep*.

13 And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.

14 Ephraim provoked *him* to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his LORD return unto him.

The following difficulties stand out upon the very surface of the narrative. The blame bestowed upon Jacob for his deceitful behaviour to Esau is strangely followed by the commendation passed upon him for his wrestling with God at Bethel. If this stood alone it would yet be possible to urge that the lesson of the passage is that Israel having imitated Jacob in his sin should now imitate him in his repentance. But the sudden return to the history of Jacob in verse 12, which has no possible connexion with its content, clearly proves that there is a serious dislocation of the text. What is a possible cause for this dislocation? In common with Dr. Harper and other recent editors, we find the cause in the painful shock which the very severe handling of the patriarch Jacob caused to a later reader. He felt, what is no doubt the case, that there was a better side to the character of Jacob, and that it was ill to blame the patriarch for the sins for which at the last he won forgiveness. Hence we suppose that this reader added a not unskilful comment of his own devising.

> "And by his strength he had power with God. . . .
> . . . Wait on thy God continually."

Now, the insertion of this comment must inevitably have thrown the whole passage into confusion. It is evident that there must have been some reference to what

happened after Jacob's deceit—and that the words "Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep" must have followed immediately upon "He took his brother by the heel (or supplanted him) in the womb." Quite obviously there was now no room for them where they originally stood, and room had to be found for them somewhere else. The only place in which to put them was further down, and apparently the words "By a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he shepherded" were placed with them from the superficial resemblance which they afford to "Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he shepherded."

This is the best explanation that seems procurable of the evident maltreatment of the passage, and it has certain advantages in its favour in that it makes only one excision, for which it gives a not improbable reason; while the strophic structure becomes regular, two strophes of ten lines each being followed by two strophes each of seven lines, an arrangement which is substantially present in other sections. It should be noticed that the first two lines of the section belong to the previous chapter in the A.V., but are placed in the present chapter. The two lines which follow them are generally considered as an interpolation.*

EPHRAIM'S DECEIT (10)

Ephraim compasseth me about with lies,
And the house of Israel with deceit.
Ephraim herdeth the wind,
And followeth after the east wind.
All day long he increaseth lies and vanity;
And they make a covenant with Asshur,
And they carry oil into Egypt.

* If this couplet is genuine (*cf.* Appendix) the first two lines of stanza III. could go with stanza II., and there would then be three stanzas of 12 lines each. This is an attractive suggestion, but the authenticity of this couplet is doubtful. The question is one of great perplexity.

The LORD hath a controversy with Israel,
That He may punish Jacob according to his ways
According to his doings will he requite him.

THE DECEIT OF JACOB (10)

In the womb he supplanted his brother,
And Jacob fled to the field of Aram,
And Israel served for a wife,
And for a wife he became a shepherd.
A pedlar, in his hand were balances of deceit,
He loved to defraud.
And Ephraim said, Yea, I am rich,
I have found for myself substance.
All his labours shall not be reckoned to him,
Because of the sin that he hath sinned.

The main argument in favour of this reconstruction is that the history of Jacob not only runs in chronological order, but that it all teaches the same lesson, and this the lesson which is being pressed home by Hosea. Jacob began by deceit. Though his flight was the punishment of deceit, he continued the same methods in Syria. He got his wife by a bargain; he cheated Laban by balances of deceit, and made himself rich and Laban poor. That there was another side to the story did not trouble Hosea. Inspiration is not inconsistent with a considerable indifference to details; and if the Genesis story, especially ch. xxxi., be studied from his standpoint, he had a fair case in support of the moral he desired to enforce.

THE PROPHET'S MISSION REVERSED (7)

But I, the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt,
Will yet make thee to dwell in tents as in the days of the feast,
(And) By a prophet the LORD thy God brought Israel from Egypt,
And by a prophet was he shepherded.
But I will speak unto the prophets,
And I will multiply visions,
And by the hand of the prophets will I destroy them.

OWING TO ISRAEL'S SIN (7)

Gilead is vanity,
Yea, they have become naught.
In Gilgal they sacrifice oxen,
Yet their altars shall become heaps on the furrowed fields.
Ephraim hath provoked him bitterly,
And his blood shall he leave upon him,
And his reproach will his LORD return unto him.

These stanzas seem to speak of a new Exodus, not like the old Exodus out of captivity, but into captivity. The prophets will in faithfulness to Jahveh reverse the treatment of the first prophet Moses. The tents which told of the Exodus journey shall now be used to cover them on their journey through the northern wilderness. This is due to the religious apostasy of the nation. Its altars shall be made heaps—and Israel shall be left weltering in his blood.

SECTION IX.—CHAPTER XIII

THE DOOM OF SAMARIA

ISRAEL'S FALL DUE TO IDOLS (8)

When Ephraim spake trembling
He exalted himself in Israel;
When he offended through Baal,
He died.
But now they sin more and more,
And make for themselves molten gods of their silver,
Even idols after their own understanding,
All of it the work of the craftsmen.

AND TO HUMAN SACRIFICE (6)

These cry unto them,
Sacrifice ye men, there are no more calves.
Therefore shall they become as a morning cloud,
And as the dew that passeth early away ;
As the chaff that riseth from the threshing-floor,
And as the smoke from the chimney.

The strophic arrangement of this chapter is very complete, and has been excellently set forth by Dr. Harper. The first two stanzas deal with idolatry as Israel's besetting sin. It has led to human sacrifice of the most revolting character. The second line of stanza II. is, by the alteration of a single letter, capable of a rendering so horrible that the gentler version of the LXX. has been allowed to stand. (Cf. Appendix.)

NOT THE FAULT OF GOD (8)

Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt,
And thou shalt know no god save me ;
And beside me there is no Saviour.
I did shepherd thee in the wilderness,
In a land of great drought.
According to their pasture they fed to the full,
And their heart was lifted up,
Therefore have they forgotten me.

WHO IS BECOME THEIR ENEMY (6)

And I will be unto them as a lion,
As a leopard on the road to Asshur.
I will pounce on them like a bear robbed of his whelps
And I will rend the caul of their heart.
And there will I devour them like a lion,
And the beast of the field shall tear them.

IT IS THEIR OWN FAULT (8)

Thou hast destroyed thyself, O Israel,
Yea, who shall be for thy help?
Where is thy king now
That he may save thee in all thy cities,
And thy judges of whom thou saidst,
Give me a king and princes?
I gave thee a king in mine anger,
And I took him away in my wrath.

These three stanzas deal with the single subject, "who is responsible for this?" The first stanza declares that Jahveh has not been wanting to His people. Ever since the time of the Exodus His providential care has been over them, but they have turned His benefits into an occasion of falling, and (stanza II.) have turned their friend into a deadly enemy—into a wild beast ready to spring upon them and rend them to pieces. It is their own fault. Neither king nor judges shall be able to deliver them (stanza III.). Probably the king Hoshea was already in exile.

The strophic arrangement here changes, and in four short stanzas the prophet depicts the doom of the unrepentant country.

THE TALE OF SIN IS MADE UP (6)

The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up,
His sin is laid in store.
The pangs of travail come upon him:
He is an unwise child,
For it is no time to tarry
At the gate of childbirth.

DELIVERANCE NOT TO BE EXPECTED (5)

Shall I redeem them from the hand of hell?
Shall I ransom them from death?
Where are thy plagues, O death,
Where, O hell, is thy destruction?
Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

Picture is heaped upon picture in these hurried stanzas. Israel's tale of sins is complete. The pangs of travail are upon the mother, and yet birth still delays ; the child will not be born. The better time never comes. Shall there even yet be deliverance ? No, the time for deliverance is passed ; death and hell must do their worst.

The Desert Wind (6)

Though he be fruitful among his brethren,
An east wind shall come,
A wind of the Lord rising from the wilderness ;
And his fountain shall dry up,
And his spring shall be parched ;
It shall spoil the treasure of every precious vessel.

Of Destruction (5)

Samaria shall be laid waste,
For she hath rebelled against her God.
They shall fall by the sword ;
Their babes shall be dashed in pieces,
And their women with child shall be ripped up.

The fruitfulness of the nation is blasted, as it were, by an east wind rising from the desert—a graphic picture of the advance of Assyria. Fountains and springs of water shall dry up, and the precious vessels shall be spoiled of their treasures. Then, dropping metaphor, the prophet depicts the destruction of Samaria with its scenes of slaughter, the death of the inhabitants by the sword, the fate of women and children. The last stanza is composed of two words to the line, the very metre itself telling the agitation of the author. This is to be noted as indicating intensity of passion—it is no mere cold prediction of doom. But was it to be the final end ?

SECTION X.—CHAPTER XIV

A FINAL APPEAL

Israel's Confession (9)

Return, O Israel, to the Lord thy God,
For thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.
Take with you words, and turn to the Lord.
Say unto him, Take away all evil, and receive us graciously,
And we will render the fruit of our lips.
Asshur shall not save us;
We will not ride upon horses;
We will no more say "our gods" to the work of our hands:
For in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

Jahveh's Answer (9)

I will heal their backsliding,
I will love them freely,
For mine anger is turned away from him.
I will be as the dew unto Israel;
He shall grow as the lily,
And cast forth his roots as Lebanon;
His branches shall spread,
And his beauty shall be as the olive tree,
And his smell as Lebanon.

Israel's Restoration (9)

They shall return and dwell under his shadow,
They shall flourish like a garden,
They shall blossom as the vine,
And his smell shall be as the wine of Lebanon.
Ephraim, what hath he to do any more with idols?
I have humbled him,
And I will strengthen him;
I am like a green fir tree,
From me is thy fruit found.

For these stanzas cf. the next chapter, and also the Appendix.

THE MORAL OF IT ALL (7)

Whoso is wise,
And he shall understand these things ;
Prudent,
And he shall know them.
For the ways of the LORD are righteous ;
And the just shall walk therein,
But the transgressors shall fall therein.

This is not a later addition, as the editors seem to think. It is the sum and substance of the Hosean message. This message is that the world with its nations and its churches is no haphazard place in which things happen by chance as foolish people suppose, but a place of strict and infallible law. What has happened in Israel has happened because it could not help happening. The righteous laws of God vindicate themselves either by way of reward or by way of punishment. "Things are what they are, and consequences will be what they will be. Why then should we deceive ourselves?" "The constitution of nature is what it is." These great words of Bishop Butler sum up not merely his philosophy, but the philosophy of Hosea.

CHAPTER II

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

"THERE has been a growing tendency on the part of the most recent writers to deal with this passage as with Amos ix. 8*a*–15, *i.e.* to assign it to a later age than that of Hosea." * This remark should be read with discernment, since it is an admission that this opinion is by no means universally accepted even among the more advanced critics, and that it is confined to the most recent of these critics. It by no means follows that this minority will eventually be converted into a majority. It is also to be noticed that those critics who reject this chapter have all of them previously rejected the Restoration passages in the first three chapters of the prophecy, while Nowack, who inclines to accept the earlier passages, is distinctly in favour of the retention of this last chapter.

It may therefore be confidently asserted that the excision of this chapter is a logical consequent upon the excision of the earlier passages. If then the former conclusion has been in any degree invalidated, the chapter now under consideration will stand upon a very different footing, since it will become the only instance of the excision of a Restoration passage, and retention, instead of being the exception, will become the rule in regard to these passages.

It is unnecessary to do more than refer to the arguments which have been already advanced in favour of the retention of the passages containing the doctrine of

* "I.C.C.," p. 408.

future restoration, but on the other hand these arguments should not be forgotten. The contention that the beauty of a passage is a valid evidence for its authenticity, is as applicable here, if not, indeed, more applicable, than when it was advanced on behalf of the very noble passages of the second chapter. This last chapter is no whit inferior, some may even think it superior, to the earlier section. Further, if it is to go, it will have to go in its entirety, and will have to be considered as a deliberate attempt to impose upon the reader a doctrine at variance with the doctrine of the prophet. The many resemblances to the characteristic phraseology of Hosea which will shortly have to be considered, will thus become proofs of a fraudulent intention, and of an attempt to make the reader suppose that he had in his hands a genuine utterance of the prophet himself.

There have, it is true, been previous instances of what can hardly be denied to be interpolations, but these instances stand convicted both by the confusion which they introduce into the text, and by their manifest inferiority to their environment. They are the work of mere bunglers; but if this passage be regarded as an interpolation, it must yet be acknowledged as a work of real genius, being not merely beautiful in itself but a most skilful imitation of an author possessed of a most original and unusual style. Such an attempt at imitation is quite absent from previous interpolations, they are manifestly inferior, and are easy of detection. There is no comparison between their merit and the merit of this final chapter. It may also be urged that there was a reason for the previous interpolations, which is absent from the present case. These interpolations are mainly concerned with Judah. They are, it would seem, the work of a pious editor, who desired that his contemporaries should take to heart the stern warnings given in a previous age to the sinful kingdom of Israel, hence he endeavours

to make his readers suppose that these warnings were meant for themselves, and inserts "Judah" in place of Israel. Another, or perhaps the same, hand, is concerned with orthodoxy. It hurts him to hear such harsh treatment meted out to the holy patriarch Jacob, and he is not without excuse, for the history which tells of Jacob's deceit also tells of his rehabilitation after repentance. The interpolator tries to convey this lesson in the words, "Therefore turn thou to thy God," etc. He draws a quite legitimate lesson from Jacob's repentance, in place of the lesson which Hosea had drawn from Jacob's sin, but in so doing he throws the whole passage into almost inextricable confusion. His excuse is that he meant edification. But what edification for the men of two centuries later could be conveyed by the interpolation of chapter xiv.? Samaria had long ago fallen, and had drained to the dregs the cup of anger. Why should some writer of a later date trouble to insert a prophecy of restoration, which had been falsified by the event, and paint a picture of happiness now and for centuries past impossible of realization? Hosea might paint such a picture while the blow had not yet fallen; but no one after Hosea. Thus it is not illogical to accept the presence of interpolations in the prophecy without admitting that the fourteenth chapter is an interpolation.

Passing from the general to the particular, we now turn to deal with the specific arguments which have been advanced to prove the later date of this chapter. We are at once brought up against the striking fact that no linguistic objection is suggested. Had this been the case, it is inconceivable that so learned a critic as Nowack should have accepted the chapter as it stands. The very contrary is the case, and G. A. Smith speaks none too strongly when he says: "There is, in short, no phrase or allusion of which we can say that it is alien to the prophet's style or environment, while the very keynotes of

the book—*return, backsliding, idols,* the work of our hands, such pity as a father hath, and perhaps even the *answer* or converse of verse 9, are all struck once more." This list might be increased by the addition of *fall, the dew, corn and wine,* and *the vine.* Hosea and his supposed interpolator certainly move in the same sphere of metaphorical language. Such a series of coincidences point either to identity of authorship, or to conscious imitation of a very high order.

It is needless to do more than make a very brief reference to the various critical arguments against the authenticity of the chapter, which are tabulated under ten heads in the *International Critical Commentary.* Such an argument as that "the allusion to a covenant with Egypt (verse 4) is incomprehensible in Hosea's time" is scarcely to be upheld, partly because there is no allusion to a covenant with Egypt, except so far as the assertion that "we will not ride upon horses" is also an assertion that they did ride upon horses, and that these horses could only be procured by a definite covenant, and not in the ordinary way of trade between adjacent countries. But secondly, 2 Kings xvii. 4 relates that the King Hoshea was at this very time sending an embassy to So, King of Egypt, so that if the writer had mentioned a covenant, it would have been a sign of his intimate acquaintance with the period.

Take again the statement that the second verse "looks back upon the punishment as completed," the reference being to the words "thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." The word "fall," or more accurately "stumble," may equally well refer to the actual sin as to the punishment which is its consequence. Anyhow, Israel had already suffered very considerable punishment, even prior to the fall of Samaria.

The suggestion that "emphasis laid upon physical blessings is strange on the lips of Hosea" implies that the

blessings referred to by Hosea are material in their nature, which seems extremely unlikely. In any case, there are parallels in the second chapter of Hosea quite sufficient to show that this objection, even if it could be maintained, would certainly not prove the present passage non-Hoseanic.

The criticism that "the whole description is wanting in unity; entirely different features are combined one with another" * (Grimm), if it can be reconciled with the opinion of Dr. Harper that the strophic arrangement is "exceedingly regular," is certainly a criticism that if insisted upon might prove that nothing of the original Hosea remains, for the whole prophecy is singularly open to the same objection. It may certainly be affirmed that this chapter is no more diffusive than many other portions of the prophecy.

All these and similar objections have an appearance of unreality, but the same cannot certainly be said with regard to the great contrast of tone which distinguishes this section from that by which it is preceded. This difficulty is real, while all the other objections are illusory, and it must be taken seriously.

It must, in the first place, be admitted by the critics that this contrast is not peculiar to the passage under consideration, but that it is found throughout the whole prophecy, which strangely alternates between hope and fear, between love and displeasure, between consolation and threatening. It has, indeed, been attempted to remove some at least of these seeming contradictions, but with very partial success, and if the rebutting argument advanced in Part I. be correct, with no success at all. Even should the alternations in the first three chapters be eliminated others remain, *e.g.* the splendid passage which depicts "the remorse of God," and which is closely followed by a picture of restoration difficult to reconcile with threatenings of destruction. There is also the appeal

* "I.C.C.," p. 253, note on Hosea iv. 5.

to Israel to "sow the seed of righteousness," coupled with the assurance that "there is time to seek the Lord," though, in another place, it is said, "they shall seek Him but shall not find Him." Hosea revels in contradictions, and has the smallest possible regard for consistency. He writes as he feels at the moment. His sky is either bright with sunshine, or black with cloud. He alternates between confident hope and utter despair. On one page Israel is Lo-ammi and Lo-ruhamah, on the next it has become Ammi and Ruhamah. He does nothing by halves. He is confident as S. Peter when he leapt into the waters, and he sinks like S. Peter when his faith fails him. He is a prophet of extremes, and if the thirteenth chapter is hardly to be reconciled with the fourteenth chapter, what would prove inconsistency in any other writer is consistency in Hosea, for he is consistently inconsistent. In dealing with such a prophet ordinary rules of interpretation simply do not hold.

What, it may be asked, is the value of a prophet so full of contradictory predictions? The answer is that, in the modern sense of the word, Hosea can hardly be said to predict at all. All his predictions are conditional. When he foretells the doom of Samaria, this prediction is conditional upon perseverance in sin; when, on the other hand, he foretells a happy consummation, this consummation is conditional upon repentance. In the former case events will take their natural course, and cause will lead to effect; in the latter case the natural entail will be cut off by grace. Here lies the contradiction which so vexes the soul of the critic that he attempts to suppress the half, and that the nobler half, of the Hosean Message in the interests of consistency. He argues that Hosea must have either believed in the doom or in the salvation of Israel. He desires above all things that Hosea should be logical, whereas logic is the last thing in the world that Hosea cares about. He does

not argue, he sees; and he paints what he sees. He paints at one time the picture of hope, at another the picture of doom. He is, as it were, an artist standing between two easels, and turning now to the one and now to the other. The ideal stands upon his right hand resplendent with the glories of the coming age, the real stands on his left hand, dark with the stains of human sin. Somehow, somewhere, the ideal must find its realization, because it is the expression of the intention of God. Again and again Hosea dashes himself against the prison walls of destiny, and against hope he believes in hope. It is not that he is blind to facts; no man ever saw facts more clearly. He is under no illusion as to the gravity of the moral and religious condition of every section of the nation, and he delivers his tremendous indictment with ruthless severity. He neither flatters nor spares, but lashes iniquity and unreality with a grim irony that cuts like a knife. Greatness has been measured by its strange feature of apparent duality. Of all men that ever lived Hosea possessed this feature. The inability to comprehend this duality in the Celtic mind has cost England centuries of annoyance with Ireland. She has taken seriously what ought to have been overlooked, and overlooked what she should have taken seriously. The Hosean prophecy is the Ireland of the Teutonic critic. Diligent and painstaking beyond all praise, he is congenitally incapacitated from understanding the more than Celtic mind of Hosea and its devotion to the ideal, in spite of, perhaps even because of the opposition of facts. Again and again Hosea returns undismayed to his theme, never allowing that the will of man can remain obdurate to the love and mercy of God. Here is the tragedy both of his domestic life and of his ministry. No one else would, under the same circumstances, have been content to take back a thrice-offending wife; yet he will not drive her into the divorce

court, but woos her back to fidelity. What he is in his home, he is in his theology. To the calm critical mind the inference is clear that there were two Hoseas, and the argument seems decisive. What the critic cannot comprehend is that the two Hoseas were not two persons at all, that they were not separated by intervening centuries, but that they are one and the same person so expansive in his greatness as to contain them both.

Criticism has made its task more difficult by a regrettable inaccuracy in speaking of this last chapter as a picture of the final triumph of Jahveh's love, and as a prediction. It is not a prediction at all, but a last and final appeal, and its illimitable tenderness is the measure of the prophet's fear that his mission may after all be a failure. He will spare no threats, he will spare no appeals. If threats have failed, appeals may yet succeed. If Israel can only see the love of God as he sees it, all may yet be well. Perhaps he has erred by too great severity, he will try the converse method. Once again he calls Israel to return.

Here criticism steps in with the erudite suggestion of what is termed "a predictive imperative." This suggestion is based upon the supposed parallels of Isaiah xxiii. 1 and Isaiah xlvii. 1. In dealing with such assertions it is always advisable to verify references. They are as follows:

"Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in."

"Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground; for there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans."

Both these passages are highly rhetorical. The imperatives are not so much predictive as vituperative. Babylon and Tarshish are being taunted with their coming destruction, and bidden to accept their doom as inevitable. Though in each case the imperatives come

first in the sentence, the real prediction comes at the end of the sentence, as will readily be seen if the sentences are both inverted, when the logical sequence will be, "Tarshish is laid waste (prediction), therefore let the ships of Tarshish howl"; "Babylon has no throne left (prediction), therefore let the daughter of Babylon sit on the ground."

Thus the term "predictive imperative" is, to say the least of it, inaccurate, since a command to do a thing can never be the same as the prediction that you will do it. The most that can be said is that the imperative declares the certainty of the prediction expressed in the rest of the sentence; and implies that this prediction is so assured that it is high time to act as if it had already been fulfilled.

These two references have nothing in common with the present passage, for the sufficient reason that the sentence "For thou hast fallen by thine iniquity" refers to the past, and not to the future. There are many imperatives in the prophecy of Hosea, and all of them either command or appeal, why then should this particular imperative be expounded in a sense different from the sense of all the rest? The answer is obvious, that the theory of interpolation requires a prediction (a prediction, by the way, which the interpolator must have known to have been falsified by the event), and so "Return unto the LORD thy God" must be rendered as if it meant "Thou wilt return unto the LORD thy God"! The imperative "Return," which is followed by three other imperatives all to be taken in the same sense, is clearly an appeal. This is confirmed by the analysis of the chapter as arranged in its stanzas. The final stanza is a prediction, the central stanza is also a prediction, but the first stanza conveys the condition upon which alone the two predictions rest. The section is a logical sequence which may be expressed in three words, Repentance, Reconciliation, Restoration, which are the three R's of

all true religion. Of these three the last is the consequence of the second, and the second is consequential on the first, but the first is always and everywhere the act of man himself. Hosea predicts the consequences of this act, picturing the happy results which are sure to follow upon repentance. He did not intend prediction, but appeal. But if he meant an appeal, he must have been writing when the future destiny of Israel was as yet in the balance; he could not have been writing from one to two centuries after the decision had taken place. Thus it is vital to the interpolation theory to treat "Return to the LORD thy God" as a prediction, and if, as we have argued, this translation is inadmissible, the interpolation theory falls to the ground.

It should be noticed, in conclusion, that, as was stated above, the excision of the fourteenth chapter is consequential upon the excision of the Restoration passages in chapters i.—iii., which is the real battle-ground of the prophecy, since when confronted with arguments drawn from these passages in order to show that the prediction of doom was not inconsistent with the retention of hope, Dr. Harper is content to reply, "These (passages) are mostly late." It is very convenient to base one conclusion upon a previous conclusion, but it is open to the grave disadvantage that whenever the previous conclusion has been invalidated the whole argument crumbles to the ground. Far too frequent use has been made of this method by that which calls itself Scientific Criticism, and the result is that the detection of a single flaw is apt to render the whole edifice precarious. The apparent success of the interpolation theory as applied to the first three chapters has led to its extension to the whole prophecy of Hosea, and thence to the prophecies of Amos and of Micah. The theory may be right or may be wrong when applied to these books, but it can no longer be supported by inferences drawn from this prophecy.

CHAPTER III

THE EVIDENCE OF LATER PROPHECY

THE previous chapter has dealt with the authenticity of the noble passage with which the book of Hosea concludes, and with which it is sought to prove that it was originally intended to conclude. The evidence in favour of the authenticity both of this passage and of the similar passages contained in the earlier portion of the prophecy, reaches a high standard of probability; but it may, perhaps, be doubted whether it amounts to a complete vindication. This doubt can only be set at rest if it is possible to prove the existence of these passages at a date anterior to that of their supposed interpolation into the Hosean text.

It seems to have escaped the attention of the most recent critics that the writings of Jeremiah, and more especially the earlier portions of his prophecy, are steeped in the influence of Hosea. There was every reason that this should have been the case, for the message of Jeremiah to Judah so closely corresponded to the message previously delivered by Hosea to Israel, that it is no exaggeration to say that Jeremiah was to Judah exactly what Hosea had been to Israel. It was, no doubt, for this reason that Jeremiah sought and found inspiration in the brief memorials of the work of his great predecessor, expanding them after his more diffuse manner, to the needs of his own generation. This correspondence is so close that, at times, it becomes actual quotation. Jerem. xiv. 10 is a literal transcript of Hosea viii. 13:

> " Therefore the LORD doth not accept them ;
> He will now remember their iniquity,
> And visit their sins."

It will be remembered that the last two lines also occur in Hosea ix. 9, as the refrain by which that section is concluded. Its importance in Hosea was, therefore, the probable reason for its quotation by Jeremiah. Again, the striking metaphor applied to repentance Hosea x. 12, " Break up your fallow ground," is repeated in Jerem. iv. 3. Jerem. vi. 20, " Your burnt-offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing unto me," is an echo of Hosea ix. 5. Two further instances will be considered later.

The dependence of Jeremiah upon Hosea is, however, but faintly indicated by the direct quotation of striking passages. Far more important is the general theological rememblance. Once again the true relationship in which the nation stands to its God is expressed in terms of marriage, and Jahveh is " the husband " of His people. Jerem. xxxi. 32 :

> " Which my covenant they brake,
> Though I was a husband unto them,
> Saith the LORD."

Once again, idols and foreign nations are regarded as " the lovers " which Israel follows to its hurt (Jerem. xxii. 20 and *passim*). The comparison of Israel to a wild ass seeking a mate in the wilderness (Hosea viii. 9) is repeated and amplified in Jerem. ii. 24 :

> " Thou art . . . a wild ass used to the wilderness
> That snuffeth up the wind in her desire ;
> In her occasion who can turn her away ?
> All that seek her will not weary themselves ;
> In her month they shall find her."

The hope of Israel is again expressed in the noble words of the great Hosean parable, " Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." This sacred relationship is again

dated from the Exodus, and Jeremiah ii. 2 might well have come from the pen of Hosea :

> " I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth,
> The love of thine espousals ;
> When thou wentest after me in the wilderness,
> In a land not sown."

Almost as frequently as in Hosea, Jahveh is said to have " a controversy " or " contention " with His people. Indeed, it is doubtful whether any one prophet was ever so deeply indebted to another as was Jeremiah to Hosea. They were, indeed, spiritually congenial, and the tenderness of Jeremiah naturally leant upon the no less tender strength of his great predecessor in fulfilling a like mission.

This correspondence extends to a multitude of phrases used in common by both writers. It is not, of course, possible to argue dependence in every such case, but, allowing for every reasonable deduction, the coincidences are so frequent, and often so remarkable, that the fact is beyond question ; and a more exhaustive search would probably reveal many more of them, but this may properly be left to the commentators. Sufficient instances will be given to establish the fact of indebtedness, which is all that is necessary for the present argument.

Hosea x. 10. Two evils.	Jerem. ii. 13.
Hosea iv. 7. Change their glory.	Jerem. ii. 11.
Hosea xiii. 7. The way of Asshur.	Jerem. ii. 18.
Hosea viii. 8. A despised vessel.	Jerem. xxii. 28.
Hosea xiii. 15. A precious vessel.	Jerem. xxv. 34.
Hosea v. 7. Deal treacherously.	Jerem. v. 11. xii. 1.
Hosea v. 8. Blow ye the trumpet.	Jerem. iv. 5. vi. 1. li. 27.
Hosea vii. 11. Without understanding (heart).	Jerem. v. 21.

Hosea vi. 10. A horrible thing.	Jerem. v. 30. xviii. 13. xxiii. 14.
Hosea ii. 3. Lest I make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land.	Jerem. vi. 8. Lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.
Hosea ix. 15. All their princes are revolters.	Jerem. vi. 28. They are all revolters of revolters (*i.e.* grievous revolters).
Hosea xi. 5. They refuse to return.	Jerem. viii. 5.
Hosea xii. 11. Their altars are as heaps (*gallim*).	Jerem. ix. 11. I will make Jerusalem heaps (*gallim*).

Sufficient instances have now been given. It is to be observed that these verbal correspondences occur most frequently in the early chapters of Jeremiah. This is only what might have been expected. The influence of Hosea was strongest at the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry. As the years went on, Jeremiah's style became more individual, and he had less need to have recourse to the writings of his predecessor. Some few phrases abide with him to the last, but the greater part are gradually discarded.

These passages have been adduced for a special reason, which must now be set forth more at large. Jeremiah was the spiritual heir of Hosea. Now, beyond all doubt, Jeremiah, though a prophet of doom, was also a prophet of restoration. If his mission was "to pluck up and to break down, and to destroy and to overthrow," it was also "to build and to plant." * This twofold commission combined apparently inconsistent and even contradictory elements. May it not have been that he was led to study Hosea because he found in his message the same apparent inconsistency which was so pronounced a feature of his

* Jer. i. 10.

own message? It would be of no small comfort to him to discover that he was not the first of the prophets to have so perilous a task assigned to him. If, however, Hosea was merely a prophet of doom, if his message was, what Dr. Harper imagines it to have been, one of unrelieved darkness, the perusal of his prophecy would have brought little comfort to his disciple. It is hard to believe that if the Hosea read by Jeremiah was the Hosea of the *International Critical Commentary*, his earliest student would have made its teachings the inspiration of his own message. Jeremiah had no need to consult Hosea's writings unless he found in them something applicable to himself. That he did, as a matter of fact, consult them, and that very frequently, seems an undoubted proof that he found in them that tenacity of faith in the Divine Covenant which he needed to uphold him in his own ministry; and where could this faith have been found in Hosea except in the Restoration passages?

This argument, even apart from any direct evidence in its favour drawn from particular passages of Jeremiah, is of no little cogency. It may, however, be fairly countered, if such evidence be lacking. It could then be said, "You hold that Jeremiah was led to the study of Hosea because he found in his writings a message of restoration; but if he found such a message, why does he not make any reference to it?" Such an *argumentum e silentio* would be of undoubted weight; for the significance attaching to omission is directly proportioned to the probability of insertion, and in such a case as this, the probability of some quotation as to Restoration is at its maximum.

There are, however, two such quotations, and these must now be very carefully considered, since, if our view of them be correct, the Restoration doctrine is to be regarded as not merely probably but certainly taught in the book of Hosea.

A. The First Disputed Passage of Hosea

The passage to be first treated occurs in Jerem. xxx. 9: They shall serve *Jahveh their God, and David their King*, whom I will raise up unto them. This should be compared with:

Hosea iii. 5 (now included in ch. i.). Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek *Jahveh their God, and David their King.*

It need hardly be said that this sentence where it occurs in Hosea is regarded by Dr. Harper (pp. 216, 223) as an interpolation, the reason given being that "the expectation of a Messianic King is of later origin, having its beginning with Isaiah, and the name David is not applied to him until the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel" (p. 216). Again (p. 223), "This, interpreted from the point of view of the Judaistic period, is not merely a king of the Davidic dynasty, *i.e.* the dynasty itself (cf. Amos ix. 11), but the Messianic King, the second David." But why should it be so interpreted?

It will be noticed that it is simply assumed that it is to be thus interpreted because it is supposed, on other grounds, to be a later interpolation. We have already examined these grounds, and found them inadequate. Thus there is no reason why we should consider the words "David their King" to be Messianic. They may perfectly well be dynastic as found in Hosea, though Messianic as found in Jeremiah.

It is not a little strange that Dr. Harper should not in this connection have mentioned the identity of expression between Jeremiah and Hosea. Now this identity cannot possibly be thought to be fortuitous, the collocation of Jahveh and David being so remarkable. Either Jeremiah was actually quoting from Hosea, or a later student of Jeremiah interpolated this passage into Hosea

from Jeremiah. No other alternative is even remotely possible. Which is the more likely supposition? *We know that Jeremiah was in the habit of quoting from Hosea,* and there is no evidence to prove that a later reader of Jeremiah reversed the process, and actually inserted quotations from Jeremiah into Hosea. Was there ever such an instance of preferring the longest way round to the shortest way home? Anyhow, the words are a quotation in one of the two writers. If Jeremiah quoted them, he quoted them directly from a book which we know that he had had in his hands. If, on the contrary, they are a quotation as found in Hosea, Hosea did not himself quote them, but somebody unknown, two or three centuries later, picked them out of Jeremiah and inserted them in Hosea!

We have pointed out in another chapter that there is a searching test of authenticity applicable to all such cases, viz. that the passage in which the disputed words have the greater force is their proper and original home. Judged by this test these phrases are wanderers when found in Jeremiah, for the passage would do almost equally well without them, whereas as found in Hosea they are the very gist of the whole passage and the culmination of his prophecy of restoration.

But there is more to be said; no one can possibly read several very important passages of Ezekiel without being convinced that Ezekiel also had before him the restoration passages of Hosea.

That there may be no dispute upon a point of such vital importance, it will be convenient to quote the passages of Hosea to which we regard Ezekiel as referring:

(*a*) "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their King, and shall come with fear unto the LORD their God, and to his goodness in the latter days. And the number of the

children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall it be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head, and they shall go up (spring up) from the land," etc.*

(*b*) "And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and with the fowls of the heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground . . . and I will make them to lie down safely." †

Let these passages be placed side by side with the two following passages from Ezekiel in order to see whether Ezekiel could have written as he did without having previously read them.

The first passage occurs Ezekiel xxxvii. 22–27.

"And I will make them one nation in the land . . . and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. . . . And my servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. . . . And David my servant shall be their prince for ever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace . . . and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

A still more striking parallel is afforded by Ezekiel xxxiv. 23–25, which must be quoted *in extenso*:—

"And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd, *and I Jahveh will be to them for a God, and my servant David a prince among them.* And I will make with them a covenant of peace,

* Ch. i. and iii. as combined. *Cf.* Chap. III. of Part I.
† Hos. ii. 18.

and will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land, and they shall dwell securely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods."

The reminiscences of Hosea are too obvious to be evaded. There is not merely the reference made in one breath to Jahveh and David, but there is the reference to the "one head," and to "the covenant of peace," which the second chapter of Hosea describes, and to the words with which that chapter ends: "I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, My God."

One further correspondence must also be given.

The important and very beautiful passage Hosea ii. 14, 15 is rejected (cf. note, p. 238, I.C.C.) as "clearly late" by Dr. Harper, following Volz and Marti and the earlier views of Nowack. It has, however, an important parallel in Ezekiel xx. 35, 36. The resemblance will be clearly seen if the two passages are compared.

(Hosea) "I will bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart. . . . And she shall make answer (? be married) there, as in the days of her youth, and in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt."

(Ezekiel) "And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you."

It should also be noticed that the phrase "in the days of thy youth" occurs Ezekiel xvi. 60.

This triple coincidence, "wilderness," "Egypt," "days of thy youth," makes a strong case for free quotation on the part of Ezekiel. As has been argued previously, it is most unlikely that a later writer should have picked these phrases from Ezekiel and combined them together in order to insert them into Hosea, and have done this so successfully that the Hosean passage is actually improved by the insertion. It may also be mentioned that Ezekiel

ch. xvi. has distinct references to Hosea, in the hiring of lovers (verse 33, cf. Hosea viii. 9, 10) and in "the discovery of nakedness" (verse 37, cf. Hosea ii. 3, 9). It may be asked why any one, finding so many references in the later prophets to restoration, should have troubled to insert certain of these references in Hosea.

How are these very various correspondences scattered over two independent prophecies to be accounted for, if not upon the supposition that both Jeremiah and Ezekiel were making use of Hosea? Is Hosea to be thought to have been posthumously improved by quotations made from two later prophets? This is evidently impossible. Scientific criticism must not make too great demands upon our faith, or upon our credulity.

It is quite true that Jeremiah and Ezekiel both regard the future David as no mere dynastic title, but as a personal sovereign, and that he means more to them than he meant to Hosea. If then Hosea had been interpolated from their writings, his doctrine would have been far more definite than it is. The inference is inevitable. Hosea provided the text, and first Jeremiah, and afterwards Ezekiel, preached sermons on that text, and there is more in the sermons than there was in the text. But the text came before the sermons, and was not made up out of the sermons. Jeremiah did not get his conceptions from Ezekiel, nor Ezekiel from Jeremiah*; they both got their conceptions from Hosea, and worked them out independently of each other. The Hosean passages do not contain the full Messianic doctrine, but they are necessary in order to account for that doctrine as found in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The correspondence between these two prophets would have been inexplicable had it not been for their common indebtedness to Hosea, and not merely to Hosea

* This is possible, but not probable, the likeness between the two prophets being confined apparently to the passages in which both show the influence of Hosea.

but to the restoration passages of Hosea, which are thereby proved to be authentic.

The Second Disputed Passage of Hosea

The disputed passages occur at the two extremities of the Hosean prophecy. Hosea begins and ends with hope. All the manuscripts and all the versions unite in including these passages; and if there was ever a copy which lacked them it has failed to leave any trace of its existence. How readily the critics would have welcomed any such indications of textual disturbance is shown by the use which they have made of what seemed like a break towards the end of the first chapter, in order to justify the excision of many other passages against which there was no such evidence, and the loss of which tends to impoverish the book! Their haste has been their undoing, since it has led them to attack subsequent passages with a courage and even recklessness inspired by an imagined success. As an instance of these kinds of arguments it is sufficient to cite those brought against the concluding section of the last (the fourteenth) chapter. This section is as follows:—

> "Whoso is wise,
> And he shall understand these things;
> Prudent,
> And he shall know them.
> For the ways of the Lord are righteous,
> And the just shall walk therein;
> But the transgressors shall fall therein."

Dr. Harper says of this passage that "a reader from a late period adds his own understanding or interpretation of Hosea's writings as a whole." He bases this condemnation on "the strong colouring of the wisdom speech," and says that this "betokens the lateness of the conception." Such arguments are not very convincing. The Eastern mind is inclined to sententiousness, and the later wisdom

literature is the consequence, rather than the cause, of this quality. Besides, Dr. Harper appears to have forgotten that (on page 260, dealing with Hosea iv. 11) he had remarked that " the prophet introduces the strophe with one of the many ' wise sayings ' which were familiar to him, moral sayings which constituted the stock-in-trade of the wise men who sat in the gate." He says that " other examples of the use of wisdom sayings may be found " in Hosea, and among them quotes the present passage, thus answering his own criticism.

But Dr. Harper has a more specific objection. He says that " the words *wise* (חכם), and *discern* (בין) are technical terms of the wisdom vocabulary." What if they are? They became technical because they were suitable. " Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona," even though fortitude may afterwards have become a technical term for military virtue. Were no men " wise," and did none " discern " before wisdom and discernment became technical terms? Hosea makes use of חכם in the preceding chapter (verse 13), and of בין (verse 2) of the same chapter.

The final answer to this kind of criticism is, however, to be found elsewhere. Jeremiah (ch. ix. 12 (A.V.)) writes as follows :—

" Who is the wise man that he may discern this ? "

Here he makes use of the same two words the use of which is supposed to be confined to wisdom literature! So much for Dr. Harper's objection!

But this verse proves very much more: it shows, beyond a doubt, that Jeremiah was making a quotation from this very passage of Hosea, and that this passage was to be found in his manuscript! There are two other phrases in this very paragraph which are strongly reminiscent of Hosea.* But, even more than this, what does

* " Fowl of the heaven and the beast," cf. Hosea iv. 3; and the word " heaps," cf. Hosea xii. 12 (Heb.).

Jeremiah call upon his wise man to discern? He bids him to ponder the desolation of Jerusalem and of the cities of Judah. This is what he is to endeavour to understand :—

" Wherefore is the land perished,
And burnt up like a wilderness
So that none passeth through ?
And the Lord saith,
Because they have forsaken my law
Which I set before them ;
And have not obeyed my voice
Neither walked therein ;
But have walked after the stubbornness of their own heart
And after the Baalim which their fathers taught them."

But all this is the very thing which Hosea had called upon his wise man to discern and learn from the fate of Israel:

" That the ways of the Lord are righteous,
And the just shall walk therein,
But the transgressors shall fall therein."

If anything were wanting to show that this passage was in the memory or even under the eye of Jeremiah as he wrote, it is supplied by the term " walked therein " which is common to both passages (though only really appropriate in Hosea), and by the reference to the Baalim, a cult which was far more prominent in the days of Hosea than in the later times which followed the reformation of Josiah.

It may, therefore, now be regarded as certain that the last paragraph of the fourteenth chapter of Hosea was included in a manuscript which existed a century or so after the death of Hosea, and which may have been much older than this date. Now this paragraph could hardly have followed immediately after the thirteenth chapter, and its reference to the safety of the righteous implies that there was a lesson of mercy, as well as a lesson of judgement, to be gathered from the consideration of the dealings of God

with Israel, In other words, it implies the presence of some reference to restoration. It may, therefore, be safely concluded that the presence of the close of chapter xiv. in the manuscript read by Jeremiah warrants the inference that this chapter was present in its entirety.

The evidence previously advanced in favour of the authenticity of the Restoration passages, the beauty and religious value of which plead so forcibly for their retention, has been of a cumulative character, but, if the conclusions of the present chapter are sound, it now amounts to actual demonstration. What was read by Jeremiah and by Ezekiel must have been written by Hosea.

CHAPTER IV

THE MESSAGE OF HOSEA

SOME general remarks may conclude the consideration of this great prophecy, since the attention of the reader has been distracted by the frequent reference to questions relating to its unity. This unity having been vindicated, it now becomes possible to consider the Message of Hosea in its totality.

What is the fundamental idea at the back of these chapters? It is this, that God and Israel stand in a permanent relationship. This relationship is expressed in terms of marriage. In the course of the prophecy there are other descriptions. Israel is not only the spouse of God, but His son (xi. 1, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt"); but that of marriage is the most characteristic. In two passages, vi. 7, "But they like men have transgressed the covenant," and viii. 1, "They have transgressed my covenant and trespassed against my law," this relationship is spoken of as a covenant. These passages are treated somewhat unfairly by the most recent critics. "Covenant" is translated as "ordinance" in both passages, and the second is said to be "clearly a later addition," * though no grounds are mentioned on which the excision is based. Our experience of the licence of excision exercised in dealing with this prophecy tends to show that the claim to cut out whatever is inconvenient to preconceived critical theories must be stoutly resisted.

* "I.C.C.," p. 309.

But the question is not of any real importance, since even Dr. Harper allows that "These ordinances are based upon the constitutional agreement which was understood to have been entered into between Israel and Jahveh at Sinai." * The question is thus not one of names but of things. Whether Hosea used the word "covenant" or not—and there is every reason to suppose that he did—he regarded the connection between Jahveh and Israel as of the same nature as that which existed between himself and his wife Gomer. What was true of the one relationship was true of the other; and what was true of both was that the initiation of the relationship was not due to the real or to the figurative spouse—it was due to the choice of the husband. Hosea's sad experiences led him to realize that marriage is not love. Something had taken place in the history of Israel comparable to his own marriage: it had not led to mutual love, any more than his own marriage had led to mutual love. But just as his marriage was not to be dissolved because of his wife's infidelity, so the relationship between God and Israel was indissoluble, being grounded, not in the love of Israel for God, but in the love of God for Israel. The sin of Israel was not that she refused to enter into relationship with God, but that, being in relationship with Him, she did not respond to His love. Jahveh is Israel's husband, while idols are the lovers who seek to steal away her affections from Him. Israel's spiritual condition is bad, not because she does not become different from what she is, but because she has become different from what she is. She is a contradiction in terms, she is a wife and not a wife,† "My people" and not "my people," "loved" and yet "unloved."

Behind all this imagery lies a philosophy of history. It is immaterial to discuss whether this philosophy was then expressed in the theological term "covenant," for

* "I.C.C.," p. 309. † ii. 2.

whatever the name, the idea was present to Hosea. God's covenants do not walk into the world labelled "covenant," but are indistinguishable from the historical facts by which the Divine intention has been revealed. To what facts of history did Hosea refer when he spoke of the marriage between Jahveh and Israel? Did he refer to the gradual growth of the national religion? Would he have endorsed the assertion made by his latest commentator, that "Israel was making progress all the time. Every century was raising Israel farther and farther away from the heathenism on every side, and preparing the nation for the time when the great doctrine of monotheism could and would be accepted"? * Not even Dr. Harper can, or does, contend that he did. What Dr. Harper allows is that Hosea does not agree with the modern critical school; what he contends is that Hosea, not having the benefit of "the larger point of view gained in the comparative study of centuries of history," † was wrong—saying that "The estimate of Hosea is to be treated as we treat the anachronistic utterances of other prophets, whose judgements concerning earlier events are determined by the sympathies and antipathies of a later age." ‡

Yes, but were there any earlier events at all? Dr. Cheyne decided that there were not, and that the whole early history of the Exodus from Egypt was really an Exodus from N. Arabia. Hosea, in conjunction with all the prophets, believes in the Exodus from Egypt as an actual fact, and regards this Exodus as the marriage of Israel with God. "I am Jahveh thy God from the land of Egypt." There is no need to burden the page with references, which are given fully by Dr. Harper, since he allows that "The memory of the Exodus is one firmly fixed in the minds of the Hebrew nation." §

It is somewhat difficult to grasp what is Dr. Harper's

* "I.C.C.," p. 363.
† *Ib.*
‡ "I.C.C.," p. xlviii.
§ *Ib.*, p. 241.

real conclusion upon the subject of the Exodus. If it was what the prophets believed it to be, a veritable act of God in history, it did in fact establish a peculiar relation between the Deliverer and the delivered, and very much of what Dr. Harper assigns to later development was present from the very first. Hosea's views as regards comparative religion are simple in the extreme, for he held there was no comparison between the religion of Israel and other religions, which were to him no religions at all. His standpoint is clear and unambiguous, he appeals to the past history of his nation. When it is said that "Hosea is not asking Israel to accept knowledge which the nation once possessed, but has lost; it is something really new in religion which he is holding out to them," * all that can be said is that this statement is diametrically opposed to the whole argument of his prophecy. Surely if this statement represents the truth of the matter, Hosea was perfectly capable of making a new departure in religion, and of taking to himself the credit of being the evangelist of a new gospel. What he proclaims is that his message is not new at all, but the same which was from the beginning. "I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt." His contention is that the history creates the doctrine, while the modern view is that the doctrine creates the history.

But if this be so, what created the doctrine? Modern expositors reply that it was created by the prophets, more especially by Hosea himself. Then how came it that Hosea was so wholly unconscious that he was the recipient of such a message? He, at any rate, did not create the history to which he so constantly refers, and the knowledge of which he assumes to be possessed by his hearers. The history involves the doctrine. Either God had redeemed Israel from Egypt or He had not. If He had, there was nothing new left to be invented by the

* "I.C.C.," p. cl.

prophets; if He had not, religion began with prophetism, and there is no further use for the history. Either this history meant a covenant, or it meant nothing at all. If the religion of the Old Testament dates from the prophets, there is no further use for the Exodus, and it had better be given up. If the Exodus really happened, it implies all that the prophets taught: it vindicates the action of a living God; it proves His power to be so infinitely superior to that of the gods of the heathen that their existence became problematical, they were just so many "images," and their worship was irrational "howling." *

The stress laid by modern criticism upon the theory of development, the assumption that each stage in history must represent an advance upon that by which it was preceded, does not allow sufficient room for the possibility of retrogression. This assumption is so obviously incorrect in the history of intellectual progress, that it is surprising to find it so much relied upon in the history of religion. It might have been supposed that intellectual progress would have been uninterrupted, each age building securely upon the foundation laid by its immediate predecessors. Antecedently to the knowledge of the fact, it would seem absurd that a great modern university in the twentieth century should be seriously debating such a matter as the retention of the compulsory study of a language dead some fifteen centuries. The theory of development would have suggested that such a study should have been long ago superseded. The Middle Ages represent a period of intellectual retrogression, and the classical scholar still believes in the superiority of Athens to London as a teacher of thought. But if this be the case with intellectual, how much more may it have been the case with spiritual progress! What a man knows of God depends far more upon his spiritual

* Hosea vii. 14 (as amended: cf. Appendix).

apprehension than upon the date of his birth. There are periods of utter stagnation, nay often of degradation, in the spiritual history of man. The dark ages of theology did not occur at the dawn of Christianity, but the sun was obscured at noontide, and faith's eventide still seeks inspiration from its far-off morning. Doubtless this fact is capable of a natural explanation—the decay of one civilization, and the tardy rise of another civilization upon its ruins. The fall of Greece and Rome, and the rise of the modern world, only after long centuries of preparation, these events explain what would otherwise transcend belief. But may not the same thing have happened in the history of Israel, and have happened from the same cause, the intrusion of a lower civilization, a civilization incapable of appreciating the standards of the past? This is what the prophets, this is what Hosea, believed to have been the case. They consider themselves not as discoverers but as reformers. They call Israel back to its old allegiance, and reproach their contemporaries with their declension from the pure faith and morality of their fathers. Recent criticism has established the fact that the prophets were the historians of the nation. If they had been innovators they would have cared little for history; they would have said that God had provided some better thing for the generation then present than He had vouchsafed to its predecessors. There are those in modern days who hold that they would have been justified in so speaking, and that, to all intents and purposes, spiritual religion was born of the prophets. It was open to them to preach that God having in time past spoken to their fathers, had in these latter days given a fuller testimony to Himself, as indeed He had—but they do not make the claim. They base their appeals upon history. The great principle which they endeavour to impress upon their hearers is the truth of a Divine covenant or special relation of the

nation to Jahveh, a relation which owing to ignorance had lapsed and must be renewed. They represent themselves as repairing the altar which had fallen down, not as its builders but as its rebuilders. With one consent they refer to Jahveh as the God of their fathers, and date His advent in history, not as having first occurred in their days, but in the far-off days of Moses, and even in those primitive ages when the patriarchs shepherded their flocks in the land of Canaan, and were themselves under the shepherding of God.*

It is commonly said that the prophets projected their own beliefs into the history of the past. To a certain extent this is no doubt true, and the critics themselves are not immune from the same tendency. But in the main it must be conceded that they believed in the substantial accuracy of what they recorded with such surpassing ability, such spiritual fervour, such literary charm. The consciousness of vocation has been regarded as creative of a mythical history, a notion which conveniently explains away the history, but fails to explain the consciousness. The prophets held that this consciousness was produced by their knowledge of the facts of history, and surely they were in a position to know. The sense of the National vocation is an unique phenomenon, explain it how we will. It is open to us to hold that this truth first shone forth when it was revealed to the prophets. We may date this spiritual quickening at what point in Jewish history we conceive the most probable. The fact of Inspiration is the one thing that is *de fide*, not the exact date of its appearance. None the less the framers of theories would have welcomed the adhesion of the prophets, and the value of their support is the measure of the seriousness of their opposition, and that they do oppose this theory is abundantly evident, indeed it is hardly denied.

* Hosea xii. 12, 13.

Must their witness be contradicted by the latest theory of development? Dr. Harper does not hesitate to tell Hosea that he did not know what he was talking about, and that the study of comparative religion, undertaken two thousand six hundred years later than his date, has established truths of which he could have known nothing. This is a large demand, for Hosea and his fellows are witnesses, and it seems unfair that they should be summoned to stand down, because their evidence is inconvenient, when had their evidence been the other way it would have been regarded as conclusive!

What the prophets teach with regard to the ancient history of their nation is an integral part of their message. It is not mere antiquarianism, but had an important bearing both upon the present and the future. This is why the relation with Jahveh is described in terms of marriage. Marriage is a past act which establishes a permanent relationship—it is not evacuated by post-nuptial sin; for the husband still continues faithful though the wife has proved faithless. Transfer this to God, He is still the God of Israel, even though Israel be no longer entitled to call itself His people. The point of the whole prophecy lies here—and it is here that Dr. Harper's treatment is so unsatisfactory. He minimises the intention of Hosea to restore his wife, and on critical grounds rejects the passages which speak of the intention of God to restore Israel. Previous chapters have shown that these critical processes not merely evacuate the prophecy of meaning, but that they cannot be regarded as tenable. The prophecy is one and indivisible.

As Dr. Harper himself allows, this makes the case "entirely different." * This difference has an important bearing upon Hosea's attitude to the past and future history of his nation. It is the historic relationship of Israel to Jahveh which is to him the pledge of restoration

* "I.C.C.," p. cliii.

in the future. It is not so much Jahveh's goodness which is the hope of Israel, as Jahveh's faithfulness. It is not a new revelation of His character which gives ground for hope, but His consistency, and His constancy to His past promises. When it is said that "Hosea's mind dwells minutely on Israel's past history, which he interprets in the light of the situation of his own days," * it should rather be said that he interprets the present in the light of the past. If there had been no events which indicated a special relationship entered into between Jahveh and Israel in past ages, Hosea would have had no gospel at all, or at any rate a different gospel. To him the past covenant was the pledge of future restoration, to ourselves his teaching with regard to a future restoration is a proof of the importance which he attached to past history.

This history has been greatly disparaged by modern criticism, and the theological world has learned so much from this source that it is inclined to regard the critics as infallible. Let this debt be freely acknowledged. The study given to the Old Testament has been beyond praise, and its findings have revolutionised our preconceptions. *À priori* views of what a revelation ought to be have rightly been discarded in presence of the proofs of what it really is; theories have had to yield to facts. But critics have theories of their own, and these theories are as much amenable to criticism as those which they have replaced. Many of them were based upon presuppositions now found to have been unwarranted. The spade has modified the conclusions of the pen, for the spade reveals facts, and the pen elaborates theories. The Code of Hammurabi has vindicated the possibility of a Mosaic code. The argument of anachronism, so frequently brought against the ascription of any literary capacity to early ages, and which, when it was made, was not without probability, has now been proved to be

* *Ib.*

erroneous. It is now no longer possible to say, "We may safely deny the ascription to Moses of literary work of any kind"; or to say with Bennett, "The strenuous nature of his (Moses') activities as leader and organiser of the tribes left no opportunity for literary pursuits." * People do not rely upon such tenuous arguments, contradicted by the common experience that no one is so capable of additional work as a busy man, when they have stronger arguments to produce. The assumption that Moses could not have taught a true monotheism is invalidated by his predecessor Akhenaten, and Dr. Kittel does not hesitate to declare that "The lofty and pure conception of Jahwe in the days of Moses degenerated later into an idea of God which limited His sphere of influence to a certain people and country." † He also says, "The tendency to regard all the Biblical texts as the product of exilic and post-exilic times which prevailed some twenty years ago . . . has among a wide circle of investigators given place to a sounder theory." ‡

The same writer, speaking of the excision theory carried to such lengths by Dr. Harper, remarks that "It is only at the expense of great violence to the text of the Old Testament that it is possible to maintain that all these Messianic prophecies, or even the greater part of them, are the products of a late period." §

These admissions have cut the ground from under many theories which have not so much been drawn from the evidence supplied by the Old Testament, as introduced in defiance of that evidence. This subject goes far beyond the scope of the present volume. It is only referred to because it may take a very long time before such a revision of past theories penetrates into the treatment of particular

* Hastings, "D.B.," iii. 446.
† "Scientific Study of the O.T.," p. 183.
‡ *Ib.*, p. 75.
§ *Ib.*, p. 243, f.

books. Dr. Harper tells his readers that he began his work in 1890, now thirty years ago. Then his general positions were undisputed, now they are outgrown. There is need, not merely of revision, but of reversion, and of a return to the standpoint of the prophets themselves. The very serious errors which have been discovered in regard to the message of Hosea may tend to show that there are limitations even to "a Scientific Criticism," and that the study of the prophets has not yet reached finality.

The message of Hosea is not out of date. It was in the expectation of finding such a message that the present writer entered upon the study of this wonderful prophecy. Has his anticipation been disappointed, or has it been fulfilled? Outside the window of the room in which a considerable part of the present book was written, a tall lighthouse sends its beams far across the waves of the North Sea, the scene of deadliest strife and of most heroic sacrifice. May not the message of Hosea be such a beacon-light across the ages? The God of history is a God in history. Jewish prophets and historians were accustomed to employ a dramatic method of expressing their consciousness of God: He spoke, He wrote, He entered into covenant, as a man entereth into covenant with his friend. These expressions must not be construed too literally, lest the disappearance of the letter should be taken to mean the cessation of the experience. To adhere to the traditional interpretation of literal Covenants and of audible communications is of less than no value at all, if it have to be admitted that the day of covenants has ceased, and that the voice of God is no longer heard. Let it rather be believed that the events of history are still under the Divine guidance and that He still elects both individuals and nations, making them conscious of His choice, and awakening in them the conviction of their responsibility. This is the permanent significance of

Hosea's message. He regards the nation as the bride of Jahveh, and traces all its sins and misfortunes to the neglect of this sacred relationship. It is often assumed that this relationship was exceptional, and that it was confined to Israel. Criticism goes still further and announces that this doctrine was a relic of Paganism, and that Jahveh was no more to Israel than Moloch was to the children of Ammon; that He was, so to speak, converted by His worshippers, and that instead of Jahveh having made the nation, the nation itself made Jahveh. Hosea had no such doctrine. To him the national vocation was the voice of God in history. This was his message. May it not be a message to us? The God who once cared for nations cares for them still. The Divine arrangement is concerned both with time and with place, with inward disposition and with outward opportunity. The God of Hosea is still the living God. A mistaken criticism has cut out all references to restoration from the pages of Hosea's prophecy. It has been a joy to have put back these references into their original place in his prophecy—but this would be of little value if they were not words of truth. The message of Hosea rightly interpreted has it in its power not merely to foretell but to effect restoration.

"Whoso is wise, and he shall understand these things,
Prudent, and he shall know them.
For the ways of the LORD are right,
And the just shall walk therein,
But the transgressors shall fall therein."

PART III

APPENDIX

PRINCIPLES OF CRITICISM

IN dealing with the problem of reconstruction it is necessary to keep in view two opposite schools of thought. The first of these schools is averse to any and every attempt at reconstruction, the second is inclined to push reconstruction to the furthest possible limit, or even beyond that limit. The former school is perhaps almost negligible at the present time, though its exponents are entitled to respect for their firm conviction of the reality of Inspiration, and are men from whom it is painful to have in any degree to differ. And yet to refuse to emend a faulty text is in effect to saddle the prophet with the blunders due to the ignorance of his commentators and such a mistaken reverence brings down the level of Inspiration until it includes such faults and errors as seem inconsistent with Divine assistance. In dealing with Hosea we have to take our choice between supposing an illiterate prophet or an incompetent scribe. It is surely not derogatory to Inspiration to hold that the manifold imperfections, and the dense obscurity of very many passages, are to be ascribed, not to the prophet, but to the scribe. A reverent commentator will endeavour to purge the text of every element which obscures the force and dignity proper to Inspiration.

It is now necessary to deal with the very different school which carries reconstruction to its extreme limit. Is such licence allowable? It is vehemently urged by many writers that such an attitude is inconsistent with the belief in Holy Scripture; and that to adopt it is to make the word of God of none effect by a speculative criticism. The present writer cannot bring himself to

argue the matter upon these high grounds. To him the question does not present itself as one of principle but as one of probability, and he proposes to discuss it from this standpoint, being convinced that all *à priori* methods are equally to be deprecated. Speaking generally, however, it must be allowed that a merely conjectural emendation stands upon a very low level of probability. The vast number of such suggested emendations, as are given, for example, by Dr. Harper, is in itself a proof that the great majority of them must be worthless. Such licence of suggestion as is made use of by Dr. Cheyne in his *Two Religions* is a positive outrage on probability. In a single passage containing fourteen words he actually makes no less than ten alterations! Calculated by the doctrine of ordinary probability, the chances against success in so many guesses are almost infinite. These vagaries of the critics are only instanced in order to show that conjectural criticism must have tangible evidence in its favour before it can hope for acceptance. A very large proportion of the suggested emendations chronicled by Dr. Harper must be ruled out of court, as offending against this principle; their very multiplicity shows that there is no finality to be attained in this way.

Much the same must be said in regard to the almost ubiquitous suggestion of interpolations, by which quite a quarter, and that the noblest quarter, of the book has been excised. The very fragile basis upon which this excision rests has been exposed in the present volume. The failure of the critics to discover an alternative to interpolation in the accidental dislocation of paragraphs, does not encourage implicit reliance upon the critical sixth sense which has been claimed as its peculiar endowment by this school of intuitive reconstruction. Interpolation theories ought not to be resorted to, without the recognition of certain grave objections which seem not to have received sufficient consideration. The improbability of any widespread theory of interpolation increases with the importance of the prophecy supposed to have been thus tampered with. When a prophecy is of high spiritual authority, this improbability becomes almost insuperable. The mere insertion of marginal notes is probable enough,

and this probability increases with the value of the subject-matter; since the greater the interest of any document, the more persons will be likely to have inserted their personal opinions in the form of marginal annotations and observations, which afterwards came to be incorporated in the text. This kind of addition to the text is, indeed, hardly to be called interpolation, being really due to accident; but it is a much more serious matter when criticism imputes the intentional interpolation of important doctrinal passages. Such interpolation involves this dilemma: if the interpolator really believed in the spiritual authority of the prophet, how could he have ventured to add his own private opinions; and, conversely, if he thought his own opinions of so high a value, why did he seek to commend them by the authority of the prophet? Furthermore, real interpolations are by no means difficult of discovery; their speech betrayeth them; they fail to cohere with their new environment; they bear tokens of later thought; they exhibit manifest inferiority of style, and poverty of expression; they throw the sequence of the argument into confusion. Certain of the references made to the patriarch Jacob are undeniably of this nature. The motive for their insertion is obvious, and the case for their excision is a very strong one. But to insist upon the experiment of excision, when the usual indications are absent, is no less unscientific than to deny the possibility of interpolation when these indications are present. Many of the arguments advanced in support of interpolation are in a high degree precarious, and give the impression of having been made to order, and of being attempts to justify the verdict after the execution of the supposed criminal. It is urged, for example, that certain ideas which are found in the earlier Isaiah are an anachronism in Hosea. Is criticism such an exact science that it is competent to hazard so definite an assertion? A revised chronology shows that, for a considerable period, the ministries of Hosea and of Isaiah were contemporaneous, and there can be no anachronism of thought between contemporaries. There is a yet more serious exception to be taken against many of the assertions made by Dr. Harper or recorded

by him as having been made by others—an exception which may be put in the form of a question. Is Hosea to be judged by recent theories as to the growth of the religion of Israel, or is he a part of the evidence upon which these theories rest? He cannot stand at once in the dock and in the witness box. When his evidence is inconvenient he is summarily contradicted; while if it seems to suit the theories, his support is accepted with enthusiasm. Hosea's view of the past history of his religion is by no means that of the modern critic; and very much of the criticism, which has been so lavishly meted out to his prophecy, is due to his being regarded as an inconvenient and even hostile witness. This attitude is unworthy of a scientific criticism.

It would appear from the foregoing considerations that considerable abatement may have to be made from the conclusions reached by recent writers, and that they must, at least, be received with caution. But, perhaps, the most unfortunate result of the study of Continental criticism arises as much from its merits as from its defects. It is so greatly superior to previous criticism, that the student may be forgiven for believing that it has reached finality. Had the present writer, for example, begun his work by the study of this criticism he would, very probably, have assumed that there was nothing left unsaid, and that further research must inevitably prove unprofitable. His attention would have been diverted from the first-hand study of the Hebrew text to the perusal of the numberless commentators who have laboured upon it for the past half-century. He would not have ventured to approach so difficult a task as that of textual reconstruction without reference to previous writers, and yet if he had referred to them, he would never have attempted to approach it at all. His excuse must be this, that he found himself involved in the work and in the fascination of textual reconstruction before he was aware of his temerity, and having gone so far, it was impossible to turn back. Whether he would have been well advised to retrace his steps, must be left for others to decide. Much of what is now to be placed before the reader has been anticipated, but it is not for this reason worthless,

since it forms an independent confirmation of results obtained by previous workers in the same field. Very little has been taken from previous commentators, and such indebtedness is always acknowledged. Much however is now put forward, it is believed, for the first time.

What is of even more importance than the particular emendations proposed, is the method by which, such as they are, they have been obtained. The writer has become convinced that the unsatisfactory condition of the Hosean text is not so much due to the carelessness of copyists or to the slow attrition of years as to another, and less obvious, cause. The phenomena presented both by the M.T. and by the LXX. are very remarkable. Both texts are normally accurate in all simple and straightforward passages, both break down in what must have been the more obscure passages. Now to a copyist one passage is much the same as another passage. The transcriber of a legal document is just as likely to be correct in the parts he does not understand, as in the parts he can comprehend without difficulty. Perhaps he is even more likely to be correct in the difficult passages, since when he is occupied in writing out these passages, he will make more frequent reference to the original, and will trust less to his memory. In the Hebrew text, and equally in that of the LXX., incorrectness varies directly with the difficulty of the particular passage. What is the probable cause of this invariable phenomenon? Why, for example, is the text of Hosea so much worse than the text of Amos? The answer is that, whether in the case of an actual translator, or in the case of a copyist who had to turn an unvocalised into a vocalised text, it was impossible to do the work without a full comprehension of the meaning of the author. Thus when the author was writing simply, the copy or translation would be correct, but when he wrote in unusual language the transmission would be faulty. The primitive Hebrew MSS. were written without vowels. This fact made a demand upon the intelligence of the person by whom the vowels were added, a demand in exact proportion to the difficulty of the passage. This, and this alone, explains why it is

that the text of Hosea is so corrupt, and why the corruption of the text is greatest in the most obscure passages. It does not follow that the early MSS. of Hosea were inferior to those of other prophets, which may, or may not, have been the case. All that can be asserted with confidence is that the thought and diction of the prophet were rugged and unusual, and that he was difficult of interpretation. For it must never be forgotten that the insertion of vowels into a text hitherto unvocalised demands intelligent interpretation on the part of the scribe, lest he should insert them wrongly. Such a scribe stands very much in the position of a person who is set to write out in longhand the shorthand notes of a reporter. No capable shorthand reporter troubles himself to do more than insert an occasional vowel. He relies upon the intelligence of the longhand scribe to supply the correct vowels. This scribe will only be accurate according to the measure of his intelligence, and where intelligence is lacking, or where the original speaker was somewhat incoherent, the result is often very far removed from accuracy. This comparison reproduces the exact circumstances under which Hebrew MSS. were transmitted. The Hebrew alphabet was a shorthand alphabet, not merely because of the absence of vowels, but also because of the great similarity between many of the consonants, the absence of stops and capitals, and of any division between the words. No wonder that a text transmitted under such conditions tends to be inaccurate, especially in the originally more obscure passages. The demand made upon the intelligence, and even upon the spiritual capacity, of the copyist, would be so great that the wonder is that the text is as good as it is. The general accuracy of the text must be attributed to the fact that the Hebrew scribes were fully alive to their responsibilities, and that they had a general familiarity with the interpretation of the Scripture as it was read in public worship.

If it has been made out that the present condition of the Hebrew text is primarily due to a single cause, viz. the imperfection of the Hebrew alphabet, the work of reconstruction will be greatly simplified. A large mass of emendations will at once be ruled out of court. It

will not be sufficient to show with regard to any suggested emendation that it gives good sense, but it will have to be pointed out how the mistaken reading arose. There will thus be a double test to be applied in every case, and it will be found that only a small proportion of the innumerable suggestions made by Continental critics will endure the severity of this law. This will be of the utmost advantage in the present position of Hosean criticism, which is choked by its own luxuriance. Suggestions are numbered by the hundred, and even by the thousand; and but few of them have any external or internal evidence in their favour—they are just guesses. There is no end to such emendations; their very multiplicity is their sufficient condemnation. The probability of every such emendation is in inverse ratio to the amount of alteration which is necessitated by its adoption.

The advantage to be gained by employing such a test is by no means confined to the dismissal of impossible emendations. What is yet more important is that the critic is guided in the direction in which the solution of any difficulty is most likely to be found. He will, of course, first consult the evidence supplied by the versions. These may either confirm or discredit the reading of the M.T. In the former case, it does not necessarily follow that a reading thus confirmed is correct; it only shows that the error, if there be an error, is one of great antiquity. In such cases it may almost be presumed that it did not arise through frequent transmission, but that it is due to an early mistake of vocalisation, or to the confusion of similar consonants. Only some consonants are similar, and a little experience will be of value in detecting these old offenders. If the mistake was merely due to vocalisation, it should not be difficult to suggest another vocalisation, but very probably both sources of error coexist. The problem is then in its most acute form, but it does not follow that it is impossible of solution. What is most likely is that an unfamiliar word has baffled the copyists and translators, and the search for such a word must be attempted. There is no royal road to successful emendation. It is somewhat humiliating to have to confess it, but it is certainly the case that there is

considerable need of what the critic will speak of as intuition, but others might be forgiven for calling luck, and some critics seem to have been not a little unlucky. This does not mean that the emendation when discovered is necessarily uncertain, but only that chance plays a great part in the discovery. Usually it will be found that a correct emendation is a certain emendation. If the maximum of appropriateness is gained by the minimum of alteration; if the emendation thus arrived at sheds new light upon the immediate context; and, still more, if it links that context on to the subject of the paragraph, it may be fairly argued that it would be very unlikely to do all this, if it were not what was originally written. This will be all the more likely, if it adds force and beauty to a passage previously weak and insipid. Hosea was a very great writer, and it is not too much to assume that any improvement in these respects is to be accredited to him rather than to a modern critic. Emendation is the converse process to that by which the mistaken reading arose, and no suggestion is of much value, unless it can be shown how and why the original mistake was committed. It might be thought that such a method of emendation was very hazardous. This would certainly be the case if there were no restraining influence. This influence is certainly exercised by the application of the most rigid alphabetical test. If, as we hold, what is wrong became wrong because of alphabetical error, its emendation will be the rectification of this error. There is no room for re-writing Hosea at will, as is done in measure by Dr. Harper, and without measure by Professor Cheyne. When a correct emendation is made, it will in almost every instance shine by its own light, and be pronounced inevitable. So many conditions have to be satisfied by such an emendation that what satisfies these conditions is almost bound to be correct. There has been a definite source of error, and every emendation must be shown to be explicable by reference to that source.

Doubtless the experience of previous corrections will be of great assistance in suggesting both the nature of the particular error and its most probable emendation.

A student who is content to give a large portion of his time, and even of his life, to the detection of the peculiar errors incidental to the Hebrew text, would naturally attain to such a proficiency in dealing with them, that his success might surpass anticipation. There could be no greater satisfaction than to have rectified some mistake which has escaped detection perhaps since the time of the prophet himself.

Such successes are of course far more probable when the versions give one reading and the M.T. gives another reading. It may be that neither gives a reading which can at all be pronounced satisfactory, but, even so, there is much more to go upon than when both the version and the M.T. agree in a reading which is obviously impossible. Where it is a choice between them the preference lies with the M.T., but the preponderance of value is by no means so considerable as was thought by Dr. Pusey and other conservative critics. If the editors of the M.T. have the advantage of a better scholarship, the translators have the no small advantage of standing the best part of a thousand years nearer to the original. It is, of course, true that a version does not give the *ipsissima verba* of the prophet, but neither does a vocalised text, being itself the result of a process which is nearly akin to translation. It may very probably be the case that the preference which has been accorded to the M.T. in the past was largely due to the influence of New Testament criticism. The scholars who have spent their lives upon the criticism of the New Testament are naturally inclined to carry over their methods to the study of the text of the Old Testament, and to attach too high an importance to the traditional vocalisation, speaking of the substitution of different vowels as if it were an instance of merely conjectural emendation. But all vocalisation is more or less conjectural, and the sole criterion of accuracy is supplied by the context.

It may, however, be argued that the Jewish scribe was so much impressed with the religious importance of his work that he would have regarded inaccuracy almost in the light of a sin. This was certainly the case with the transmitters of the vocalised text, and an inspection

of Dr. Ginsburg's recent revision of the Hebrew text shows that the last thousand years of its history have hardly left any trace upon it. But this argument is really quite beside the point. No amount of care will, of itself, ensure accurate vocalisation, since what is needed for this vocalisation is a high degree of literary and even of spiritual capacity. The mere labour of copying a consonantal text in which there is considerable similarity between many of the letters must have made no small demand upon these qualities. Very probably the earliest manuscripts were difficult to decipher just in proportion to their antiquity, which may have been very high. Thus it must be felt that there is great scope for emendation on alphabetical lines. The writer has attempted at various times to apply the same method to the Greek Testament, but with very little result. Only a single success was gained, and that not, perhaps, certain, in 1 Cor. vi. 4, where it is suggested that *τοὺς ἐξωθεν ἡμένους* should be read in place of the very perplexing *τοὺς ἐξουθενημένους* of the text. There is, however, a great difference between the Hebrew and the Greek alphabets, and what is allowable in dealing with the former would be absurd in dealing with the latter.

The alphabetical method is in fact very conservative, since it implies that only under very exceptional circumstances should any emendation be accepted which cannot be justified upon alphabetical grounds. The mere rewriting of the text at will is thus prohibited. There is also no reason to suppose that the text has suffered in any other respect than alphabetically, and the licence claimed for drastic alterations, and for the excision of glosses and interpolations, is greatly curtailed. While it is not improbable that a whole section, as in the peculiar case of chapter iii., may have inadvertently slipped into a wrong place, there is no justification for the claim constantly made by Dr. Harper to alter the order of the text by cutting out a verse here and a verse there, and inserting them somewhere else. These are not the kind of errors likely to be introduced by the mere inadvertence of copyists. If a copyist should chance to have omitted a passage, he might conceivably have inserted the passage

lower down, but there is no likelihood that he would ever have inserted anything from a passage at which he had not yet arrived into the portion which he was engaged in copying. The present theory does not demand the attribution of such gross carelessness to a Hebrew scribe as would be involved in supposing him to have been incompetent to copy a straightforward paragraph without two or three such misplacements. He had in his transcription of Hosea a task of very considerable difficulty, and one that was often beyond his powers, but there is no reason to suppose him generally incompetent.

There is no need to pursue the matter further. The sufficiency of the alphabetical method must be estimated by its results. The individual emendations will each be accepted according to its merits, but in so far as they present any common feature, they are entitled to be judged collectively. Their general tendency is certainly towards greater simplicity of thought, and thus passage after passage becomes more luminous. One passage often becomes more closely connected in thought with adjacent passages. In not a few cases there is a beauty added, which in itself is an evidence of authenticity. The general effect of these changes viewed as a whole would be to render the book of Hosea much easier of comprehension.

It has been suggested that the corrupt condition of the text is largely due to the mode of delivery—that the words were taken down by bystanders, or reproduced from memory, and that their obscurity is primarily due to the inaccuracies inevitable to such a mode of transmission. When, however, the text is emended upon conservative lines, it will be found to be very much more continuous than is commonly supposed—and its strophic arrangement is sufficiently regular to forbid the supposition of the compilation having been made by any person or persons other than the prophet himself. A suggestion made by an Eastern traveller is that these addresses may each have been delivered several times over, until they attained a connected form from which the preacher rarely deviated. This appears to be frequently the case with the storyteller of an Eastern village at the present day, who wherever

he goes tells the same tales, and is listened to with the same rapt attention.

If this was the case with Hosea, it is not difficult to believe that his addresses stand now much as when they were first delivered. There are still passages with which it is hard to be quite satisfied, and one cannot but think that they have not yet yielded up their secrets. But this admission throws little discredit upon the method. It has accomplished very much already. Many of the emendations suggested by Continental scholars have been made upon this method or are consonant with it, as is shown by the fact that a large number of them have been reached independently by the present writer, working upon this method only. Its findings have an evidence in their favour which cannot be claimed on behalf of merely conjectural emendations. The method has accomplished much, and, in more skilled hands, might well accomplish all that is necessary for the complete reconstruction of the Hosean and perhaps of other texts.

REVISION OF THE HEBREW TEXT

CHAPTER I WITH CHAPTER III

EMENDATIONS OF SPECIAL INTEREST ARE INDICATED BY AN ASTERISK.

The other notes discuss the readings adopted in the translation given in Part II., and are for reference only.

i. 1. The opening verse is omitted from the text as probably due to later editors, as seems the case with similar verses in other prophets. It is not very accurate, for the ministry of Hosea extended far beyond the reign of Jeroboam II, obiit (?) 745 B.C., but had little if anything to do with the reign of Hezekiah, which began about 725 B.C., some three years before the fall of Samaria. The chronology of the period, for which cf. my article in *The Church Quarterly*, Jan. 1886, is substantially as follows:

	785	Jeroboam II (40)
Uzziah (35)	770	
Jotham (regent 14)	749	
	745	Zechariah (½)
		Shallum (½)
		Menahem (8)
	737	Pekahiah (1)
	736	Pekah (8)
Ahaz (10)	735	
	729	Hoshea (8)
Hezekiah (28)	725	
	722	Fall of Samaria

This chronology assumes that the reign of Uzziah was lengthened by the addition to it of the regency of Jotham, and that Jotham was never an independent king, since all the events recorded as having taken place in his reign are also recorded as having taken place in the reign of Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 8, 9 and 2 Chron. xxvii. 5, 6). Isaiah's call was "in the year that King Uzziah died," and the next chapter of his prophecy is dated in the reign of Ahaz; thus Jotham is altogether omitted, the inference being that he had no independent reign. This compression of the chronology incidentally greatly shortens the ministry of Hosea, which need not have begun till some twenty-five years before the fall of Samaria. For quite ten or more years he was a contemporary of Isaiah. The threatenings of Hosea were thus more speedily fulfilled than the ordinary chronology indicates. This chronology is more fully treated in the article referred to, which is now more than thirty years old.

i. 7. This verse is generally regarded as a later addition: cf. "I.C.C.," *in loc.*

* iii. 1. Love a (? the) woman beloved of her friend and an adulteress. R.V.

R.V. mg. "loved of her husband, yet . . ."

LXX. *ἀγαπῶσαν πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλίν.* Here the LXX. evidently read רַע in place of רֵעַ, a paramour. The translation "beloved of her friend" is strained. Probably the LXX. is right in reading an active participle, and there is a good deal to be said in favour of reading

"loveth evil," *i.e.* "of evil tendencies," since this lessens the moral difficulty.

* iii. 2. A homer of barley and a half-homer of barley. R.V.

LXX. νέβελ οἴνου. Theodotion.
ἀσκοῦ οἴνου. Symmachus.

The repetition of barley is unnatural, and the versions seem correct. What was the word translated "wine"? Evidently it must have closely resembled the word for barley. Now barley stands for שערים. We venture to suggest that what was originally written was שמרים, which occurs Isaiah xxv. 6, and is rendered "wines on the lees," evidently a strong and heavy wine. The assonance between two similar words is very Hosean, and the difference between them is confined to a single letter.

Chapter II

* ii. 3 (A.V. ii. 1). The Septuagint reads the singular, "brother," "sister," which is clearly correct. Since "your mother" is evidently the mother of the parable, the brother and sister cannot mean "disciples of the prophet," but must mean the children of the parable, as is, of course, indicated by the names being put in a reversed form. Thus this chapter is closely linked to all that has preceded. The attempts made to cut out this verse make the opening of this chapter unintelligible: it had to be cut out because Ammi and Ruhamah imply restoration.

ii. 11. My flax which should have covered her nakedness. R.V. ii. 9.

LXX. τοῦ μὴ καλύπτειν, *i.e.* "so that it no longer covers." This is much clearer. It involves the change of ל for מ.

* ii. 17. I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: *and she shall sing there,* as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. A.V.

R.V. and she shall make answer there.

LXX. καὶ ταπεινωθήσεται ἐκεῖ,

Neither of the English translations gives a satisfactory sense: the supposed reference to the Song of Miriam is very unlikely. What can be made of the reading of the LXX., which has hitherto been completely overlooked by the commentators? This reading points to a verb identical in form with the verb translated "answer" but meaning "to humiliate." Here, as in several later passages to be afterwards discussed, the LXX., we think rightly, translates by ταπεινόω. In the present case the LXX. vocalised differently and evidently read עֻנָּה, "she shall be humiliated." There is no variation in the consonantal text, so that the question is one of interpretation, and we have only to decide whether "she shall sing" or "she shall be humiliated" gives a sense suitable to the context. Let us now consider the LXX. interpretation. As is well known ταπεινόω is constantly used of the conjugal relation, and the same may be said of the Hebrew verb; is it likely that it should be so used in the present passage? Now the idea of the conjugal relationship as the expression of the covenant relationship is fundamental to Hosea. Jahveh, like His prophet, has taken to Himself a wife who proves faithless. This second chapter pictures the dealings of Jahveh with His spouse the Jewish Church, which has played the harlot by infidelity with idols. His first method is to discredit her lovers, and to deprive her of the gifts which she supposes herself to have received from them. But from verse 16 onwards He tries another method. He brings His spouse into the wilderness, that He may "speak comfortably" to her, or, as the words should be rendered, "speak to her heart." In the loneliness of her captivity she shall find "the valley of Achor a door of hope." Thus Jahveh woos again His faithless spouse, and the conjugal relation is resumed, and Jehovah is no longer Baali, "my master," but Ishi, "my husband." The analogy with the experience of the prophet is now consummated—both the prophet and his Master woo again an erring bride, and in both cases there is a passage from discipline to love. Thus the reading of the LXX. is abundantly justified. Perhaps no prophet save Hosea would have ventured such a comparison between the restoration of earthly and heavenly

love, or would have expressed it in such a realism, concentrating into a single word the human pathos of divine love. We owe this reconstruction solely to the LXX., and can only wonder that a rendering so congenial to the whole tenor of the prophecy has been so strangely overlooked. The best commentary upon the present verse is found in verse 22.

"And I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgement, and in loving kindness and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the LORD."

It should be added that it seems very probable (cf. translation) that the word עִנָּה, which occurs so often at the close of the chapter, should be translated in the same way by "marry" rather than by "answer." This would unite the chapter into an indivisible whole. It is also far better to consider that the blessing of fertility was conferred by God on His own initiative rather than sought by man, and that it came "from above."

CHAPTER IV

* iv. 4. Thy people are as they that strive with the priest. R.V.

Two almost equally valuable emendations are given, cf. translation. The LXX. reads "my people," which is an indication that they read a single כ. The emendation which we prefer reads עִם "with" for עַם "people." There is a very natural confusion between these two words, which are identical as regards their consonants. In a later passage, ix. 8, we make the converse change from "with" to "people." There are probably other passages in which this particular confusion may occur. It should always be looked for.

iv. 11. Take away the heart. My people.

The LXX. reads ἐδέξατο καρδία λαοῦ μου, thus joining the words "my people" with "heart." This seems preferable. Hosea is not using a merely commonplace proverb, but is stating an actual fact.

iv. 17, 18. We accept the suggestions of Dr. Harper on this difficult passage, and have not been able to add

anything of importance. Perhaps this passage may yet yield its secrets.

Chapter V

* v. 2. The revolters are profound to make slaughter. A.V.

The revolters are gone deep in making slaughter. R.V.
Heb. Text. וְשַׁחֲטָה שַׂטִּים הֶעְמִיקוּ

LXX. ὅ (sc. *δίκτυον*) *οἱ ἀγρεύοντες τὴν θήρὰν κατέπηξαν.*

This passage is evidently corrupt, and the English translation lacks point. As our starting-point we take the fact that the previous couplet has to do with the spreading of nets, and that the LXX. evidently considers that the present verse carries on the figure, since they translate "The net which the hunters of the prey fixed." We must next note the very suspicious resemblance in form between the two nouns, though as at present written they have no connection in meaning. We must evidently regard them as allied both in form and meaning, since this is not only in itself probable, but was actually so read by the LXX., which translates them as "the hunters of prey." In order to this both words must be altered, the first by an inversion of two letters, the second by the insertion of a single letter. In this the present writer finds that he has been anticipated by Bauer, who renders שְׁטָחוּ שִׁטִּים. This suggestion, however, does not give any accusative after the verb. A reference to Numbers xi. 32 will give the very phrase needed וַיִּשְׁטְחוּ שָׁטוֹחַ, which means literally "they spread a spreading." A similar expression for the spreading of nets is found Ez. xxvi. 5, 14, and xlvii. 10. We therefore conjecture that this passage in its original form was וְשָׁטוֹחַ שִׁטִּים חֶעְמִיקוּ, *i.e.* "the spreaders made deep the spreading of nets," which is probably what the LXX. intended to render in a form more acceptable to their readers.

* v. 5. The pride of Israel doth testify to his face. R.V.
R.V. mg. Excellency.

This passage occurs again Hosea vii. 10. There are two ways in which the "pride of Israel" may be taken, viz. Israel's insolence, or Israel's glory, *i.e.* Jahveh. The former sense agrees best with Isaiah xvi. 6 and Jerem.

xlviii. 29, where the pride of Moab is certainly his insolence. This is to be preferred, as by the LXX. This version as in ii. 17 takes the verb as passive, and in the sense of "be humbled." This gives a clear and forcible sense. There is the same doubt in Ruth i. 21, where the LXX. again renders ἐταπείνωσέ με.

v. 7. Now shall the new moon devour them with their fields. R.V.

LXX. ἡ ἐρυσίβη. The LXX. had a variant for חרש. Schleusner suggests חרש, drought. Cf. Jonah iv. 8. This seems probable.

v. 8. After thee, O Benjamin. A.V.

LXX. ἐξέστη Βενιαμίν. Some have thought that this indicates the presence of a variant reading. There is no need to suppose this. The word ἐξέστη is not to be translated "is mad," but "has gone forth," which is a free translation of Benjamin's battle cry. For the use of the verb in this sense, cf. iii. 5, xi. 11, both in LXX.

v. 11. After the commandment. A.V.

LXX: ὀπίσω τῶν ματαίων. This was noted by Archbishop Secker, and is generally accepted.

Chapter VI

*vi. 5. Thy judgements are as the light that goeth forth. R.V.

LXX. τὸ κρίμα μου ὡς φῶς ἐξελεύσεται.

This is one of the first instances of attention being drawn to the value of the LXX., and to the principle of alphabetical errors. The כ has of course been appended to the wrong word, being made a possessive pronoun with "judgement" instead of a preposition with "light." This letter is a frequent offender by reason of its double use as preposition or possessive. Here the received text makes the mistake; in viii. 1 the LXX. is probably the offender.

vi. 9. Murder in the way by consent. A.V.

LXX. Σίκιμα. This, which is merely a matter of interpretation, is commonly accepted, as by the R.V., which renders "towards Shechem."

Chapter VII

vii. 4. We accept Dr. Harper's suggestion that the words "he ceaseth from raising after he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened" are to be cut out as a gloss introduced by a reader. We do not agree with him in cutting out "they are like an oven heated by a baker," since the words are needed for the stanza, and they are also needed to account for the gloss. Unless the text had some reference to a baker, there would have been no reason to insert a gloss explaining the point of the comparison.

* vii. 5. There seems no meaning to be made out of "the day of our king." We suggest "By day our king is sick," removing the vav from the verb and placing it before the word "princes." The text was probably חָלִי וְשָׂרִים, the yod quite probably not appearing in the consonantal text, and thus the vav would have seemed to be the third person plural of the verb, whereas it is really "and" — "and the princes." This emendation makes no consonantal change, and only divides the words differently.

vii. 6. LXX. *ἀνεκαύθησαν* probably represents the true reading, "I.C.C." *in loc.* The suggestion of "their anger" instead of "their baker," cf. Targum, is generally accepted by the Editors.

vii. 10. Cf. Note on v. 5.

* vii. 14. When they howled upon their beds. A.V.

It has been seen that this cannot stand. Various emendations have been proposed, *e.g.* "upon their altars," Harper; or "upon their kneading troughs," neither of which gives good sense, while both involve considerable consonantal change, which is always to be deprecated. What is needed is an unfamiliar word, which the copyist, not understanding, replaced by a familiar word. Such a word is found in משכיותם, which occurs in Numb. xxxiii. 52, and Ezekiel viii. 12, and which means "images." This is very close indeed to the M.T. משכבותם, the only difference being confined to one letter, and if the yod happened to be written, as not infrequently, in an elongated form, the only difference would be in the bottom

stroke, which turned the yod into a beth. The sense could not be bettered. "They do not call upon me; yea, they howl upon their idols." Hosea refuses to regard the calf-worship as anything but sheer idolatry.

This reading agrees very well with "they cut themselves for corn and wine," a reading derived from the LXX. *κατετέμνοντο*, which involves the insignificant change of double ר into double ד. For the correct reading see 1 Kings xviii. 28. The cutting of mutilation follows naturally upon the howling addressed to the images (as in the narrative of the Baal prophets), since the latter was disregarded.

* vii. 16. They return but not *to* the most high. A.V. (So nearly R.V.)

LXX. *ἀπεστράφησαν εἰς οὐδέν.*

We venture to think that this represents a superior text. The Hebrew text can only be made to translate by the interpolation of the preposition "to." The LXX. transposes and in place of לא על evidently read על לא, *i.e.* "they returned to that which is nothing," for "an idol is nothing in the world." That this idea was present to the mind of Hosea is shown by his contemptuous change of Bethel into Bethaven, the house of vanity or nothingness. The LXX. reading is the *difficilior lectio*, and no doubt the Masoretes thought they had made a brilliant emendation by the inversion of the words. Modern criticism may not be of this opinion.

Chapter VIII

viii. 1. Set a trumpet to thy mouth. A.V.

LXX. *εἰς κόλπον αὐτῶν ὡς γῆ.*

Here the LXX. evidently reads חיק and עָפָר dust, and also takes the second personal possessive as a preposition. Rectifying this as an evident mistake, we conclude that the text as interpreted by the LXX. was אֶל חֵיקְךָ עָפָר, *i.e.* "Cast dust upon thy bosom."

While that of the Masoretes is אֶל הִפְּךָ שׁוֹפָר.

Both seem to give satisfactory sense. The variation has evidently been caused by consonantal resemblance.

viii. 4. The LXX. reads *ἑαυτοῖς*, a sign that they read

לָהֶם for the rather pointless הֵם. For the construction cf. 1 Sam. viii. 5. It means "on their own choice," and makes a good contrast with the words "and not from me."

* viii. 5. Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off. A.V.

He hath cast off thy calf, O Samaria. R.V.

LXX. *ἀπότριψαι τὸν μόσχον σου Σαμαρεία.*

Dr. Cheyne has noticed that the rendering of the A.V. is unsuitable to the context; the R.V., which follows Ewald, is also unlikely, since it would imply that God had previously accepted calf-worship. Dr. Cheyne's own suggestion that זָנַח should be translated "is loathsome," is quite impossible, since the same word is used in the sense of "cast off" two verses previously. No one seems to have observed the LXX. rendering, which is the imperative (זְנַח for זָנַח), "Cast away thy calf, O Samaria." This suits the passage. Israel has cast off the good, let her rather cast off the evil. The sequel gives reasons for rejecting the calf, viz. the fact that it is nothing but an article manufactured by the artisan, and that it should be broken in pieces. The decision must rest between R.V. and LXX., for the A.V. rendering is disqualified by the absence of the pronoun *thee* from the Hebrew and LXX. The possessive, which is in the second person singular, strongly favours the imperative.

viii. 10. They shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes. A.V.

No reasonable sense seems to have been made of this reading.

The LXX. (approx. Symm., Theodotion) *κοπάσουσι μικρὸν τοῦ χρίειν· βασιλέα καὶ ἄρχοντας, i.e.* they shall cease for a little from anointing king and princes.

The phrase "king and princes" is frequently used by Hosea of the royal house. The LXX. reads ח for א in the second verb, and inserts an "and."

The Editors generally accept this reading.

viii. 11. Because Ephraim hath multiplied altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin.

There seems some want of point in this parallelism, the two members being so much alike. The LXX. gives little help, though it may be noticed that it omits the first "to sin." It is conceivable that the eye of the transcriber

was caught by the phrase "altars to sin," and that when the word "altars" recurred he incorrectly repeated the word "to sin" which was already in his mind. The LXX. seems to indicate that the phrase "to sin" should go with the second number of the parallelism :—

> "Because Ephraim hath multiplied altars,
> Unto sin shall his altars become to him."

If this be considered impossible we venture to suggest that the pointing of the two infinitives might perhaps be different, the first being piel and the second qal. The translation would then be—

"Because Ephraim hath multiplied altars to propitiate (ḥaṭṭē), Altars shall be unto him for sin (ḥaṭo)"

Naturally enough the Editors would afterwards consider that the two words should be pointed in the same way.

* viii. 12. I have written to him the great things of my law. A.V.

It is unnecessary to go into the vexed questions raised by the attempts to translate the Hebrew רבו, since it seems much better to accept the suggestion דִּבְרֵי. Dr. Harper rejects this suggestion, saying that "it is impossible to believe that if once it had had a position in the text, anything could have been allowed to take its place." This remark seems to show that he has failed to grasp the distinction between errors due to the Hebrew alphabet and errors made by mistaken interpreters. If the daleth of דבר happened, as so frequently, to be written like a resh, and the concluding resh like a vav, the next copyist might have read the word as רבו, and the mistake would thus have arisen without premeditation. The converse mistake has actually been made in Zech. ix. 10, where the LXX. reads πλῆθος, where M.T. has correctly דבר. Thus this emendation is by no means so improbable as Dr. Harper seems to think. The passage has no need of a difficult phrase, "the words of my law" giving excellent sense.

Chapter IX

* ix. 4. They shall not pour out wine offerings to the Lord,
Neither shall they be pleasing unto him.
Their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners,
All that eat thereof shall be polluted;
For their bread shall be for their appetite;
It shall not come into the house of the Lord. R.V.

This passage is unsatisfactory—the parallelism of the first couplet is distinctly poor, but the crucial objection is the strange way in which the transition is made from sacrifices in general to the sacrifice of bread, since the first mention of bread occurs in a metaphorical phrase, "the bread of mourners," and yet the following couplet treats of the actual offering of bread. As the text stands this transition can only be explained by the phrase "the bread of mourners" being thought to have started the prophet on a fresh subject, the use of bread in sacrifice. The transition from a metaphorical to a literal treatment is extremely forced and unnatural.

The faulty parallelism of the first couplet may be remedied by the transference of "their sacrifices" from the second couplet. The verse would then read—

"They shall not pour out wine offerings to the Lord,
Neither shall their sacrifices be pleasing unto him."
(R.V. mg.)

This gives a very satisfactory parallelism; but against it is the obvious fact that the next couplet lacks a nominative. The R.V. (margin) forcibly supplies such a nominative from the phrase "as the bread of mourners" and translates "their bread is as the bread of mourners." This gives good sense, but is grammatically untenable. Cheyne suggests that "their bread" has fallen out of the text. Both agree that it ought to be there. Our contention is not only that it ought to be there, but that it is there, concealed under the word לָהֶם, which should be emended to לֶחֶם by an alteration which is microscopic. This emendation explains the whole of the error. First it explains the transference of "their sacrifices" from its rightful place in the first couplet to the second couplet.

The words simply had to be transferred, since the proper nominative of the second couplet had been vocalised as the dative plural of the personal pronoun. When this emendation had been made, the objection made above as to the abrupt introduction of bread sacrifices vanishes. Three classes of sacrifices follow in a natural order—wine, flesh, bread.

The parallelism is improved, the sequence of thought is consistent, the language is forcible and epigrammatic, the emendation is infinitesimally small, the error is fully accounted for. It is not often that an emendation is at once so simple and so convincing. It is satisfactory * to note that this emendation has been anticipated, though not perhaps all the arguments upon which it is here based. The next couplet carries on the thought. Since bread will be no longer available :—

> " What will ye *offer* on the solemn festival,
> And on the day of the feast of the LORD ? "

* ix. 6. For, lo, they are gone away from destruction, yet Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them : their pleasant things of silver, nettles shall possess them. R.V.

The first indication that all is not right here is the defective parallelism, by which Egypt, the whole country, is opposed to Memphis, a single town in the same country. Much more serious is the strange phrase translated (A.V.) " their pleasant *places* for their silver," the word " places," surely an absolutely essential word, being interpolated by the translators. The R.V. is no better, " their pleasant things of silver " (the word " things " being also interpolated, though without indication) being obviously very doubtful both in sense and also in grammar, for the preposition ל is most inadequately translated by " of." This phrase is sufficient in itself to cast suspicion upon the passage, and probably would have done so had this rendering not seemed inevitable. It is very strange that under these circumstances the Commentators seem to have made no reference to the LXX., which reads as follows :—

* The same emendation must be made Jer. xvii 7.

πορεύονται ἐκ ταλαιπωρίας Αἰγύπτου,
καὶ ἐκδέξεται αὐτοὺς Μέμφις
καὶ θάψει αὐτοὺς Μαχμάς·
τὸ ἀργύριον αὐτῶν, κ.τ.λ.

Here we first notice that Egypt is no longer in parallelism with Memphis, but goes with the previous sentence. The LXX. takes it as a genitive depending on "destruction," but it is, of course, to be taken as the accusative of place * —"they flee from destruction to Egypt." The verb "shall gather them up," which made very poor sense when joined with Egypt, now of course goes as the LXX. indicates with Memphis.

But we cannot leave Memphis standing without a parallelism, and we need a nominative to the verb "shall bury them." The LXX. finds this nominative by taking the word "Machmad" from the following verse, and taking it as a proper name, which it Grecizes into "Machmas." It will be noticed that this is merely a matter of punctuation, neither the vowels nor the consonants suffering any change. The translation of the passage as emended from the LXX. will thus be—

"Wherefore, behold, they flee from destruction to Egypt,
Yet Memphis shall gather them up,
And Machmad shall bury them."

Nothing could be better than this: at one and the same time the parallelism is improved, and the strange phrase "their pleasant things (or places) of silver" disappears. The sentence which follows is also much improved, and the preposition ל obtains its natural sense. "As for their silver articles, nettles shall possess them." All these considerations are in favour of this emendation. Its adoption must, however, depend upon evidence of quite another character. If no such place as Machmad were known, the rendering would no doubt be ascribed to the blunder of one of the LXX. translators, even though such a mistake would be very strange in a writer, who, however incompetent as a grammarian, must surely be presumed to have possessed an adequate knowledge of the very country for the inhabitants of

* Probably the LXX. originally read "ν" instead of "υ."

which the LXX. translation was being made. There were, however, two towns bearing the name Machmad or Machomades, the one on the Greater Syrtis, the other on the Lesser Syrtis. That on the Greater Syrtis seems the more probable, as being nearer to Palestine. Now, a fugitive from Palestine, driven as the context suggests by hunger, and journeying by land, might well be intercepted by Memphis, and gathered into one of the cemeteries of the city of tombs. But if, in order to avoid this fate, he should elect to go by sea, he might well be driven from his course, and be wrecked off Machomades, and buried in the quicksands of the Syrtis Major, a fate which must have frequently overtaken Jewish sailors. Thus Memphis and Machmad (the alliteration is peculiarly Hosean) become the Scylla and Charybdis between which the Jewish emigrant must perforce choose, and as he must go either by land or by sea, his fate would be certain either way. The main argument in favour of this rendering is the almost infinite improbability against there being such a place as Machmad, and such a Hebrew word as Machmad, if the two are not to be considered as identical.

* ix. 7–9. The prophet is a fool, the man that hath the spirit is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and because the enmity is great. Ephraim was a watchman with my God : as for the prophet, a fowler's snare is in all his ways, and enmity in the house of his God. They have deeply corrupted themselves, etc. R.V.

This passage is very obscure, the LXX. gives no help, and the editors almost rewrite it, but greatly differ from each other. The general sense must determine the interpretation of the parts. The word rendered " watchman " may be used in a bad sense, cf. Ps. xxxvii. 32. " The wicked watcheth against the righteous," and such a sense is required by the present context. עִם *with* should be pointed as עַם people. Thus the sentence will read, without any consonantal changes,

" Ephraim watcheth against the people of my God."

The phrase " the people of my God " refers to the remnant, whose views of God are identical with those of the prophet Hosea.

In the rest of the sentence we make two changes. In the first place we follow the LXX. in connecting העמיקו with what precedes rather than with the verse that follows, where it is out of place. The phrase "they have gone deep, they have corrupted themselves" is very strange, and is hardly equivalent to "they have deeply corrupted themselves." The same word occurs in Hosea v. 2. In both passages the LXX. renders the word by the same equivalent *κατέπηξαν*, and it will be noticed that both passages have to do with the setting of nets. This seems to give the clue. We suggest that the copyist repeated the word משטמה, (enmity) having come to a word so very like it that his mistake was very excusable. This right word we conjecture to have been משטח, which occurs Ezek. xvi. 5, 14, and means the spreading of nets. The suggestion avoids the many changes in the text chronicled in the I.C.C., pp. 332, 333. The change only involves the dropping of the single letter מ, and the turning of ה into ח, which is hardly a change at all. The passage is now as follows:—

"Ephraim setteth an ambush against the people of my God.
The prophet, a fowler's snare is in all his ways.
They have hidden a net in the house of his God,
They corrupt themselves," etc.

* ix. 10–17. The general sense of this passage has already been given, but several points remain for discussion. Verse 11. With which line should כבודם be connected? The editors all connect with the first line—"His glory shall fly away like a bird." The LXX. connects with the second line, "Ephraim shall fly away like a bird; their glory is departed from the birth, the womb, the conception." There is much to be said for this—the first line predicting captivity, and the second declaring the cause of captivity, viz. the carelessness of mothers in respect of the first aim of marriage. Birth, pregnancy and conception have ceased to be had in honour.

Verse 12. Woe also to them when I depart from them. R.V.

LXX. *σάρξ μου ἐξ αὐτῶν*, evidently reading בְּשָׂרִי *i.e.* my flesh is destroyed from amongst them. Israel as circumcised bore in the flesh the token of their adoption, and

thus might be called "the flesh of God." * The text as it stands is weak, and this interpretation, though unusual, deserves more attention than it has received. The use of מן with verb understood is not without examples.

Verse 13. LXX. *Εφραὶμ ὃν τρόπον εἶδον εἰς θήραν παρέστησαν τὰ τέκνα αὐτῶν*, which at least makes sense, whereas the M.T. makes nonsense. *θήραν* probably stands for ציד, but M.T. were probably right in reading צור, a knife, or the edge of the sword. It is the usual confusion between resh and daleth. It is not essential to know what was the exact Hebrew text which was in the MSS. from which the LXX. translated, but we conjecture שחולה בניו. This emendation makes the whole passage give a connected sense, which it has certainly not hitherto possessed.

It should be mentioned that *εἶδον* is not in Swete's text and its absence tends to confirm the present emendation. Perhaps "I have seen" was added as a desperate attempt to make sense of the supposed reference to Tyre. Without the words the couplet would read :—

"Even as Ephraim hath put his sons to the knife,
So shall Ephraim bring forth his sons to the slaughter."

Chapter X

* 1. פְּרִיוֹשְׁוָה־לוֹ is evidently impossible. LXX. reads *ὁ καρπὸς εὐθηνῶν αὐτῆς*.

The key is evidently furnished by the LXX. *εὐθηνῶν*, which occurs Job xxi. 23 and Zech. vii. 7, and in both cases is the translation of the Hebrew שָׁלֵו. We find that Dr. Harper has anticipated us in making this discovery, but he throws the key away, preferring a quite unlikely emendation of his own which has no MSS. or Versional authority. Our emendation is therefore פְּרִיו שָׁלֵו, or sticking more closely to the LXX. *αὐτης*, פִּרְיָהּ.

Probably M.T. took the לו as third personal pronoun, פרי as the simple nominative without a possessive. Thus it was left with יהש out of which to form a verb. In order to do this they quite cleverly transposed

* Cf. Jer. xi. 15: "The holy flesh is passed from thee."

the letters into יְשֻׁעָה. A similar transposition seems to have occurred xi. 7. Such transpositions were inevitable to cover a mistake once committed, since the translator or vocaliser had to make some attempt to reduce every passage to coherence, even though the clue had escaped him.

2. Now shall they be found faulty. R.V.

LXX. *νῦν ἀφανισθήσονται.*

The same doubt also occurs xiii. 16 (also v. 15). The idea of destruction suits all these passages, but if the word אשם be read its meaning has to be varied to suit the context. Probably in all cases the LXX. had in their MSS. the verb שמם, but the question is of no very great importance.

5. The calves of Beth-aven. R.V.

LXX. *τῷ μόσχῳ.*

Evidently the latter is the better reading, since the subsequent verses refer to an object, apparently the thing mentioned in this verse, in the singular. This small alteration reduces the whole passage to consistency. The M.T. evidently took the construct termination as the sign of the plural. There was only one calf at each centre of worship.

7. As for Samaria, her king is cut off. R.V.

LXX. *ἀπέῤῥιψε Σαμαρεία βασιλέα αὐτῆς.*

Had the LXX. the reading נִרְמָה ? This is quite likely owing to the common confusion of resh with daleth. The LXX. should probably have the preference in such cases. Certainly the meaning "cast" is better than "destroyed" which seems the most accurate translation of the M.T. reading, since it suits better with *φρύγανον*, a chip. Foam it is true disappears, but a chip floats. Israel cast out her king as a bit of rubbish thrown upon a stream which carries it away. The LXX. may have had the same reading in x. 15.

9, 10. A very difficult and probably corrupt passage. The words שָׁם עָמְדוּ seem needless. The sense appears to be that the history of Gibeah shall be repeated, not only in the occurrence of the same sin, but of the same penalty. As once the tribes rose against Benjamin, so now the nations shall rise against Israel.

We agree with various editors in considering that בָּאתִי should be inferred from the LXX. reading (two MSS.) ἦλθεν, and take "against the sons of wickedness" with this sentence rather than with the preceding sentence.

13. With many editors we accept the reading of the Alexandrine MS. LXX. ἐν ἅρμασίν σου, as representing the true Hebrew text, cf. "I.C.C." *in loc.*

Chapter XI

2. Two emendations are introduced from LXX. "I called them" (μετεκάλεσά). In place of "from them" מפניהם, LXX. read מפני הם, translating ἐκ προσώπου μου. αὐτοὶ ἔθυον. The gain thus made is considerable, since it gives a sequence of seven verbs describing various aspects of the love of God towards Israel. These changes were made independently, but have been generally accepted by critics.

3. LXX. ἐπὶ τὸν βραχίονά μου in place of "taking them by their arms."

*4. I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat before them. A.V.

כְּמֵרִימֵי על עַל לְחֵיהֶם וְאֹכֶל אֵלָיו אוכיל׃ לֹא

This is scarcely in harmony with the beauty of the passage. A yoke is placed upon the shoulders and is nowhere near the jaws. The participle מְרִימֵי does not mean "take off" but "lift up." The preposition "on" has to mean "from off," otherwise the phrase is unmeaning. There is evidently some corruption. The collocation of two words identical as to their consonants but wholly dissimilar in meaning עַל עַל is very suspicious. We suggest the one word עֹלֵל, a babe, since the LXX. omits the word עַל (a yoke). The only other alteration needed is suggested by the confusion in Hosea viii. 1 between חֵךְ (palate) and חֵיק or חק (bosom). Probably, therefore, the word לְחֵיהֶם should be read לְחֵיקָם, (the ל being the preposition), and this should be rendered "upon their bosom." Thus the line would then read, "I was to them as they (or, as one) that lift up a babe on their bosom." This suggestion involves very slight changes. It is of intrinsic beauty, and is in harmony with the context.

Perhaps the passage in this form suggested Isaiah xl. 11: "He shall gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom"; and was itself suggested by Numbers xi. 12: "Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth a sucking child." If there be anything in these parallels, this emendation has a support which is anterior to all MSS. and versions. The comparison is so touching that if once made it could hardly pass from recollection.

The second line should be differently translated, and slightly emended, though not conjecturally, since five MSS. collated by Dr. Ginsburg (24, 30, 40, 58, 69) and two fifteenth-century texts read אוּבִיל, (*vice* אוֹכִיל), or "I carried" *vice* "I made them to eat." This reading evidently points to such an emendation of the previous line as has been suggested above, since "I carried" must be preceded by "I took up." It should also be noticed that the לֹא of the next verse, which is omitted by most editors, probably masks the pronoun of the third person. and should be appended to the verb, viz. אוּבִילוֹ. The translation of the second line would then be:

"And I stooped down unto him and carried him."

* 7a. My people are bent to backsliding from me.

"This verse is declared wholly corrupt by modern commentators (Wellhausen, Nowack)," Dr. Harper giving no less than ten renderings. His own involves the rewriting of the passage, and has little or nothing in its favour. The crucial word תלואים properly means "suspended," and is so translated by the LXX. (ἐπικρεμάμενος ἐκ τῆς κατοικίας αὐτοῦ), which shows that the LXX. had the same reading as the M.T. The word is evidently corrupt. We have to find out the cause and extent of the corruption, and to make the smallest possible alteration. We assume therefore, that the original text possessed precisely the same letters which have been handed down by M.T., the LXX. and also by the Vulgate (*pendebit*), a very strong attestation. Now all these authorities assume that ת is the first letter of the verb root. It need not of course be this, but might equally well be the last letter of the preformative יִת, the yod being either not written, or masked by the previous yod in עַמִּי. If this be the case the root of

the verb will be לאם, the ו being added in conjugation. But there is no such verb root. There is, however, a very frequent root in which these letters appear, the root מלא, which has as its hithpael הִתְמַלְּאוּ. This verb occurs in Job xvi. 10 : עָלַי יִתְמַלְּאוּ ; " they have gathered themselves together against me." We suggest that this was the actual word used in the present verse. It was not noticed that the ת was part of the preformative, but it was taken as a radical of the verb. The only verb that had such a radical, and exhibited the same consonants, though in a different order, was תלא, to suspend, so the order of the consonants had to be changed, and the present emendation claims to have put back these consonants as they stood originally when they came from the pen of Hosea. The verse gives excellent sense, " my people have gathered themselves together to revolt from me," or perhaps are " firmly purposed to revolt from me."

7b. This part of the verse may perhaps remain as translated in R.V. " though they call him to the Most High, none will exalt him." The LXX. reads *καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἐπὶ τὰ τίμια αὐτοῦ θυμωθήσεται, καὶ οὐ μὴ ὑψώσῃ αὐτόν* ; Schleusner considers that *ἐπὶ τὰ τίμια αὐτοῦ* represents the reading יקריו, *θυμωθήσεται* יִתַּר (*vice* יִחַר), and ὁ Θεὸς *ἐπί* for אֶל עַר. The translation would of course be

> " But God shall be wroth with his offerings,
> And he shall not exalt him."

It is clear that the LXX. had a quite different text, and where this is the case it is certainly *ceteris paribus* entitled to as much credit as the M.T. It is truly conservative criticism to prefer the older to the more recent text.

10. " Into the city." Others point the vowels to translate as " in anger," but there seems little reason to depart from the common text, which here has the support of the LXX.

Chapter XII

1b. But Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the Holy One. R.V.

It is questionable whether it is of much advantage to attempt to emend this verse, as it appears to be a later

Judaic addition to the text. Still the attempt may be of use for any who consider it to be a part of the text. The LXX. reads, *νῦν ἔγνω αὐτοὺς ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ λαὸς ἅγιος κεκλήσεται Θεοῦ.*

The text as thus translated seems to have been :—

עֹד יֵדָעֵם אֵל וְעַם קְדֹשִׁים נֶאֱמָר

which may be translated

"Yea, the Lord doth still acknowledge them,
And the people shall be called the holy people.

This verse seems, however, to break the order, for 1a joins naturally with verse 2, and refers to the deceitfulness of Israel, which is the theme of the rest of the chapter. We regard this verse as by the same hand which, as we hold, added the addition verses 5–7, and reduced this chapter into hopeless confusion. If these verses were regarded as genuine יהוה should be read יהיה, since the LXX. reads *ἔσται*, and the passage would then read as follows :—

"He found him in Bethel,
And there he spake with him ;
And Jahveh the LORD of hosts
Shall be his memorial."

Therefore since Jahveh is Israel's defender, it is Israel's duty to return to Him, and to wait on Him continually.

3. It seems probable that Judah was here substituted for Israel, as the whole passage concerns Israel, and that it was done by the interpolator : so many editors.

4. "In the womb he supplanted his brother" is to be immediately followed by verse 13.

"And Jacob fled to the country of Aram ;
And Israel served for a wife.
And for a wife he kept sheep."

The word for "kept sheep" שמר is precisely the same verb as the word נשמר (he was shepherded). The apparent similarity between these two verses 13 and 14 seems to have led to their being placed together.

8. This verse continues the story and relates the deceit practised on Laban.

9. In all my labours they shall find in me none iniquity that were sin. A.V.

LXX. *πάντες οὐ πόνοι αὐτοῦ οὐχ εὑρεθήσονται αὐτῷ δι' ἀδικίας ἃς ἥμαρτεν.*

This rendering with its change of persons seems preferable to that of the M.T. The changes necessary are concerned merely with vocalisation. The M.T. did not appear to notice that this verse represents the condemnation passed upon Jacob, and his descendant Ephraim, for their deceitful practices. Each should find out that "All his labours should not be counted to him by reason of the sin he had sinned."

11, 12. We transfer the אם from verse 12 to make the termination of the verb, as suggested by various editors.

For the action of the prophets, cf. vi. 5. "I have hewn them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth." What is intended is the threatening of death given by the prophets.

14. This verse is transferred to follow verse 10.

Chapter XIII

* 2. They say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves. R.V.

R.V. mg.: "the sacrificers of men."

This passage is of such perplexity that it will be best to give the M.T.

לָהֶם הֵם אֹמְרִים זֹבְחֵי אָדָם עֲגָלִים יִשָּׁקוּן

The R.V. rendering, "the men that sacrifice," is impossible. The R.V. mg. represents the true translation of the M.T. text if it is allowed to stand. Dr. Harper rewrites the passage inserting several words, and making several other changes. Such a conjectural emendation cannot possibly be of the least value. It depends upon no evidence, and leads to no conclusion. It must therefore be dismissed.

The LXX, properly punctuated, reads as follows:—

αὐτοῖς αὐτοὶ λέγουσι θύσατε ἀνθρώπους, μόσχοι γὰρ ἐκλελοίπασι

"To them they (*i.e.* the idols) say, Sacrifice men, for calves have given out." This implies two changes: זֹבְחוּ, a

very slight change, since the yod of written Hebrew is often hardly to be distinguished from the vav; also an alteration of the word which is rendered "kiss" to some word meaning "they have failed;" Grotius suggests the introduction of a teth, from the root שקט, which means "to cease." This certainly gives good sense, at the cost of very slight changes. The idols are regarded as speaking to their worshippers and demanding human sacrifices in place of the sacrifices of calves, which have been so numerous that there are no calves left. This is very cutting irony at the expense of those who sacrificed their children. This gives its force to the emphatic הֵם, the idols imposing terms upon their manufacturers.

There is another possible emendation which demands even slighter alteration, viz. עללים, which would be rendered, "Let the human sacrificers kiss the babes." Dr. Döllinger relates that "the parents stopped the cries of the children by fondling and kissing them," and "Even children were sacrificed . . . with the shocking expression that they were *calves and not children*." These sacrifices were common to the worshippers of Moloch and Astartè, deities closely related to Baal-worship. The "I.C.C." (p. 396) minimises the evidence for child sacrifice, saying that "human sacrifice did not exist in Israel till much later than Hosea's time, viz. that of Ahaz." The value of this assertion will appear from a reference to the revised chronology (cf. above), by which it will be seen that the whole reign of Ahaz fell within the ministry of Hosea! The modern theory of the evolution of the prophetic religion from the religion of Canaan naturally tends to suppress the evidence for the degraded character of this religion. If the present emendation be accepted this degradation was indeed horrible. No wonder that a later copyist should have altered children to calves.*

5. I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought. R.V.

LXX. ἐποίμαινόν σε.

* A later thought—is it impossible to suggest that the reading "calves" is after all correct, but that, as Dr. Döllinger says, they called the children calves, and that the idols instead of crying "Kiss your babes" cried "Kiss your calves"? This would be realism with a vengeance, but Hosea is a realist.

This is another instance of the confusion inevitable between resh and daleth. The variation is from ידעתיך to רעיתי, the falling away of the yod (if it was ever in the consonantal text) being explained by the fact that the previous word ends with yod. The LXX. reading is to be preferred, because (1) It explains the stress laid upon the privations of the wilderness. (2) The choice of God (ידע) took place not in the wilderness but in Egypt. (3) The word "pastures" in the next verse is from the root רעה.

7. As a leopard will I watch by the way. R.V.

LXX. *κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν Ἀσσυρίων.*

No mention of this reading is made by the R.V., though it is supported by several versions and some MSS. It is certainly to be preferred. The reference to the road to Assyria is much to the point, since Israel was prone to make overtures to Assyria. The difference lies in vocalisation only.

12–15. For interpretation, cf. "I.C.C." *in loc.*

Chapter XIV

3. As bullocks the offering of our lips. R.V.

LXX. *καρπὸν χειλέων ἡμῶν.*

The letter mem being dropped. So also the Syriac Version.

7. As the corn. A probable emendation is "as a garden." Cf. "I.C.C." *in loc.*

* 8. Ephraim *shall say,* What have I to do any more with idols? I have answered, and will regard him: I am like a green fir tree: from me is thy fruit found. R.V.

LXX. *τῷ Εφράιμ τί αὐτῷ ἐτι καὶ εἰδώλοις; ἐγὼ ἐταπείνωσα αὐτόν, καὶ κατισχύσω αὐτὸν, κ.τ.λ.*

The LXX. reads לו for לי, which is quite probable, since, as before remarked, the yod and vav are often much alike in the MSS. This alteration dispenses with the added words "shall say." More than this, the LXX., as so often, translates the verb ענה by *ἐταπείνωσα,* and replaces the poor word "regard" by "I will strengthen

him." These changes have the great advantage of keeping the same speaker throughout the stanza. The emphasis on the first personal pronoun is thus justified. All depends on Me. "I was the avenger of his sin, I am the source of his strength. I am to him as an evergreen tree, I am the cause of his fruitfulness."

THE END

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